

Trying to  
topple  
Hightower

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# IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 13, NO. 26

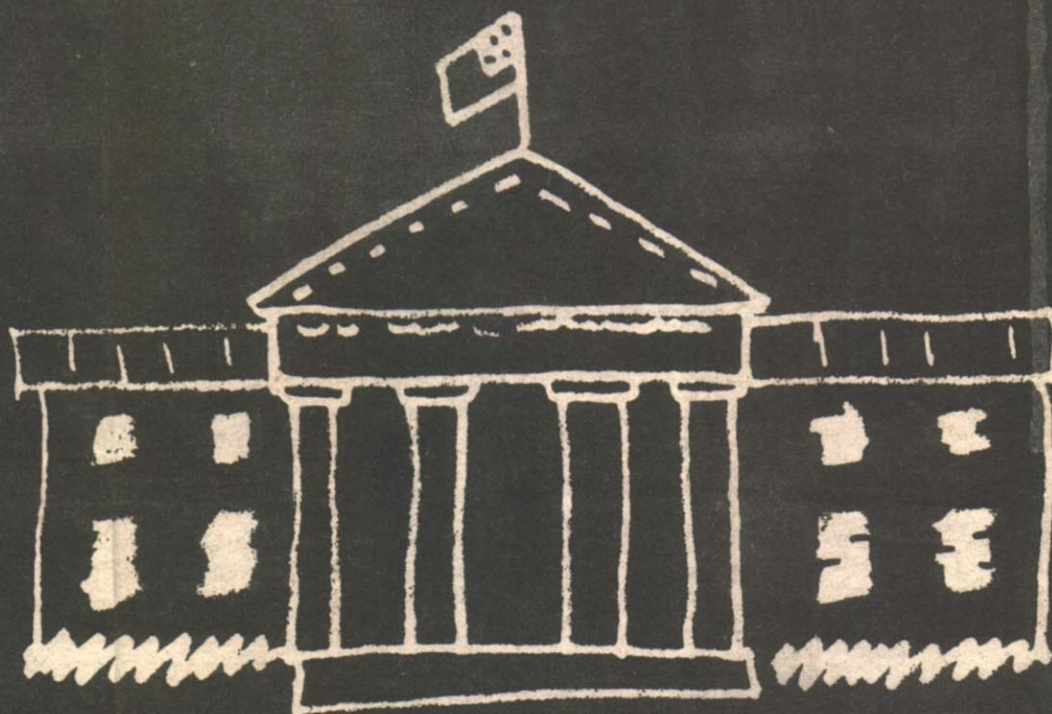
MAY 24-JUNE 6, 1989

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## DEMOCRATS' NEW EQUATION

Party theorists try to solve the presidential problem.

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**Beijing spring**

A million flowers bloom

PAGE 11

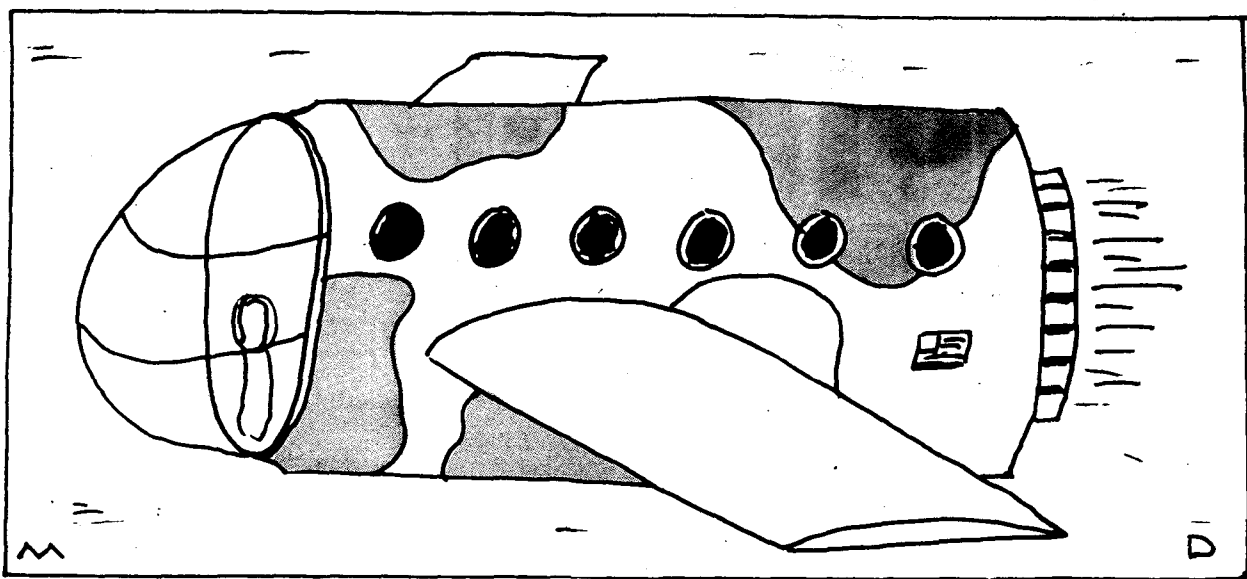
**Cosmetological hell**

The beauty part

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**PAGES 3 & 12**





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# Marketing the new U.S. Army Lite —wastes great, less killing

By Eric Nelson

When President George Bush dispatched 1,900 additional troops to Panama on May 11 to turn up the heat on Gen. Manuel Noriega, 890 soldiers of the 7th Light Infantry Division based at Fort Ord, Calif., didn't need much preparation. The base was sealed off and the battalion designated Division Force Ready One—on two-hour recall to the base at all times—was assembled. Taking little more than their packs and rifles, they formed a convoy to Travis Air Force Base near Sacramento, Calif., where their equipment was already loaded onto C-141 transports. Within 24 hours of first notice, the battalion was arriving in Panama.

The 7th is one of five new light infantry divisions (LIDs) formed within the last five years as part of the Pentagon's preparations to fight low- to mid-intensity "brush fire" wars around the world. Specifically trained to combat Third World armies like the Panamanian Defense Force, as well as internal insurgencies that threaten friendly regimes, the LIDs have become the newest hair-trigger weapon of U.S. "gunboat" diplomacy.

They represent the current leaner trend in intervention—the military equivalent of lite beer and low-fat food. In the wake of Pentagon budget cuts, *glasnost* and the current focus on "low-intensity conflict," the LIDs are politically appealing for the moment. But so far nothing suggests that they will prove any more successful in their attempts to rearrange other people's history than have

previous interventionary formations.

The "Light Fighters" like to think of themselves as "swift, silent and deadly." A recent 7th Infantry press release boasts, "It can put the right stuff in the right place at the right time." The LIDs are called the key to a "proactive" strategic doctrine of quelling regional conflicts before they become high-intensity shooting wars. Former Army Chief of Staff Gen. John Wickham, the principal designer of the LIDs, claims the force can "defuse a crisis prior to hostilities and provide a capable combat force early, should hostilities ensue."

Not surprisingly, the rhetoric surrounding the LIDs is that of peace. (For example, they are the troops chosen to participate in U.N. peacekeeping operations.) Yet their very existence creates an imperative for sudden military action. As Stephen D. Goose, a former analyst at the Center for Defense Information, noted in *Low Intensity Warfare*, "The Army's approach to the LIDs seems to be: let's get there fast and ask questions later."

**The military dentality:** Light infantry troops' main weapons are their feet and their rifles. Trained to patrol all types of terrain—primarily at night, they have no tanks, armored personnel carriers or large-scale support equipment that make heavy divisions slow to arrive in combat, expensive to maintain and ineffective in mountains, cities and jungles. Because an LID requires less support personnel, it has what the Army calls a greater "tooth-to-tail ratio," or more combat troops for a bigger "bite."

On a recent training exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, the 7th's training base on the California coast, Brig. Gen. Philip Brownell explained the purpose of the LIDs. "Our commitments internationally are diverse," he said. "We have NATO, Central America, the Middle East and Asia. They are all economic and strategic interests of the U.S." Brownell is the former assistant divisional commander for maneuver in charge of the 7th's extensive training exercises. "The light forces play into this in several ways. In Europe they could be used for urban warfare and for night disruption. In Central America, it's obvious. You can't take a mechanized division into the jungle."

The Army has a highly evolved apparatus for rapid deployment. On orders from the president and his military advisers, the Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., can immediately place more than 300,000 soldiers, sailors and fliers at its disposal. The smaller size of an LID (11,000 troops, rather than the 18,000 in an armored division) and its small all-terrain vehicles and transportable helicopters mean that an entire LID can be airlifted in 250 plane loads. Armored divisions require 1,500, and also use larger C-5A transports which need long runways.

If the objective is Central America, a brigade, or about 2,250 fully armed troops, can hit the ground within 48 hours of first notice.

Last week's deployment to Panama is not the first time light forces were dispatched to Central America. In March 1988 two battalions, or about 1,500 troops, from the 7th were sent to Honduras along with units of the 82nd Airborne as a show of force when the Nicaraguan army re-

portedly chased retreating contra guerrillas across the Honduran border. On the deployment, called "Operation Golden Pheasant," U.S. troops never engaged the Nicaraguans, although they did conduct live-fire exercises, and may have left supplies for the destitute contras.

These operations allow the army to fine-tune its deployment procedures. One 7th Light battalion commander recalled, "We were deployed to an area [in Honduras] where it was 115 degrees and extremely arid. In that kind of heat your body collapses in the first four days. So my SIOP [Single Integrated Operational Plan] calls for over-hydration as soon as we get called up."

**Problem proxies:** The buildup of interventionary forces, right down to physiological planning, inevitably raises the specter of Vietnam. Today's LIDs descend directly from U.S. tactics in Vietnam. But that war proved limitless, and the U.S. resorted to massive escalation in both troops and firepower which devastated Vietnam, added to dissension at home and merely postponed U.S. defeat.

The '70s strategy of proxy wars as a main instrument of Third World policy promulgated by Henry Kissinger and known as the "Nixon doctrine," was a reaction to Vietnam's high toll in lives, money and social unrest. The problem is that the proxies selected by the U.S. have either been ineffective, such as the Nicaraguan contras, or uncontrollable, such as the Afghan mujahedin. As an answer, the Pentagon has again decided to fight its own wars—even if on the cheap.

Last year a blue-ribbon Pentagon panel called for a paring down of the U.S. commitment to NATO and the use of "discriminate deterrence" in the Third World. This new strategy calls for "more mobile and versatile forces that can deter aggression by their ability to respond to a wide range of attacks."

**Lite fears:** Despite the evolved deployment mechanism for sending in our own boys, which includes an armada

## INSIDE STORY

of pre-positioned supply ships, the LIDs have become stuck in their own doctrinal quagmire. Even military leaders are concerned that the LIDs are too light to protect themselves against forces with superior armor, like the Nicaraguan, Syrian or Iranian armies. Clearly sensitive to this issue, Gen. Brownell claims "some tweeking can be done" by adding additional "corps plugs" of armor and artillery as they are deemed necessary.

"Impressions linger that the military forces of the Third World are lightly armed and poorly trained," wrote Michael Crutchley in *Military Technology*. "That is no longer the case." Underdeveloped nations can now buy an array of cheap and deadly hardware like shoulder-launched anti-air missiles. This could pose a problem for the LIDs, which rely so heavily on helicopter support.

The high cost of such combat becomes apparent in training exercises. After a mock assault on a command post defended by troops using Soviet tactics, one 7th Light platoon leader said, "I started out with 24 bodies and ended up with six. We got wiped out."

A 7th officer who fought in Vietnam explained that he was the last of a generation of active-duty officers to experience combat. "Out here, we're developing a new generation of combat-tested soldier, except nobody has died. The blood isn't real."

For Bush, the rapid deployment mission to Panama, dubbed "Operation Nimrod Dancer," is an expedient political tool to demonstrate resolve against Manuel Noriega, an uppity U.S.-trained dictator who has turned on his master. Yet it is unlikely that 2,000 troops, added to the 10,000 already there, will intimidate Noriega.

Meanwhile, there remains the likelihood that one day "discriminate deterrence" will land an LID in a war from which it cannot extricate itself, much less win, and the blood will be all too real.

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By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

**I**N THE WAKE OF MICHAEL DUKAKIS' DEFEAT, Democrats have groped for a strategy that will preserve their congressional majority and win back the White House in 1992.

One alternative, advocated by the centrist Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), consists of positioning Democrats as tough on crime, vigorous on defense and strong on citizenship (see *In These Times*, March 22).

But a new liberal alternative has emerged from papers by pollsters Stanley Greenberg and Celinda Lake and from a manifesto published in the current *World Policy Journal*, a foreign affairs quarterly. This alternative consists of identifying the Democrats as a "populist" party that undertakes new government economic investment largely through resources freed by dismantling the Cold War national security state.

Unlike the DLC alternative, this liberal one clearly takes into account changes in the world situation that are rendering hard-line attitudes on defense and the Soviet Union obsolete (see *In These Times*, April 26). But the framers of this new alternative underestimate the political and ideological obstacles that their program will face.

**New priorities:** The *World Policy Journal's* manifesto was endorsed by 13 prominent liberal intellectuals, including Richard Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies, former State Department official Hodding Carter III, Jeff Faux of the Economic Policy Institute, nuclear freeze founder Randall Forsberg and Kennedy School professor Robert Reich. It focuses on changing federal budgetary priorities.

The statement assumes what is widely believed on Wall Street and Main Street: that in spite of increased employment and reduced inflation, the American economy has gone downhill during the Reagan years. But contrary to the Wall Street point of view, the manifesto blames economic decline not only on a budget deficit, but also on an "investment deficit—a backlog of urgent public investment needs."

According to *World Policy*, "In today's increasingly skill- and information-based world economy, we cannot improve our productivity growth with a hollowed-out public sector—with an inadequately trained labor force, low levels of civilian research and development, collapsing roads and bridges, and a less-than-modern telecommunications infrastructure."

The manifesto estimates that to provide an effective public sector, government would have to spend \$2 trillion more over the next decade than is currently projected. To get these funds, *World Policy* would reduce drastically the current military budget.

In President Bush's budget proposal for fiscal year 1990, military spending is \$309 billion, 28 percent of all federal spending, and 48 percent of discretionary spending—all spending except Social Security and debt payment. *World Policy* would cut \$500 billion from the military budget over the next five years, and \$1.3 trillion over the next decade.

The manifesto argues that the current military budget is not directed toward national defense but toward pursuing an increasingly unnecessary Cold War battle with the Soviet Union.

The journal estimates that about half the military budget is directed toward fighting

## Proposing a new politics for a post-Cold War U.S.

a conventional and nuclear war in Europe and about a fifth toward intervening in regional conflicts in the Third World (see story on page 2). *World Policy* argues that the threat to Europe has largely been removed, and that in the Third World "diplomacy often works where unilateral demands and confrontation do not."

*World Policy* would come up with the remaining funds for domestic investment by increasing taxes on the wealthy and on business. The journal suggests introducing new upper-income tax brackets, increasing the minimum tax for corporations and the wealthy, removing the ceiling on Social Security taxes and reducing deductions for business meals and advertising. Altogether these

### The DEMOCRATS:

### Planning a party

changes would mean an estimated \$125 billion annually.

While *World Policy's* estimates of military and tax savings are probably overly optimistic, these measures would certainly defray part of the costs of new domestic investment. Where the manifesto is lacking is in any estimation of whether such radical budgetary proposals are politically feasible. If they are not, the *World Policy* statement represents nothing more than a personal statement by a few liberal intellectuals, rather than the basis for a new liberal or progressive politics. Greenberg and Lake's papers explore whether a potential majority exists for the kind of program *World Policy* advocates.

**Populist liberalism:** Greenberg, a signatory of the *World Policy* manifesto, has earned a deserved reputation as an innovative pollster and political analyst. In two papers issued this year, "Liberalism Reconstructed," written with his associate Lake, and "The Democratic Party: America's Team," he has tried to show how Democrats can win in the '90s.

Like the DLC, and unlike many of the Democrats identified with Jesse Jackson, Greenberg and Lake argue that to win, Democrats must concentrate on winning back middle-class independents and conservative Democrats (see story on page 12). But unlike the DLC, Greenberg and Lake argue that Democrats can win back the middle class by espousing a variant of liberalism.

Greenberg and Lake's paper on liberalism is a somewhat jumbled collection of data and observation, but it is possible to construct a clear analysis by putting the two papers together. Greenberg and Lake reject the DLC view that Democrats must emphasize defense and national security issues. "Voters believe now that our security rests more with 'economic power' than 'military,' and Democrats need to force that choice and shift in favor of investment," Greenberg writes. "Let the Republicans languish in weaponry, silent on America's future."

According to Greenberg and Lake, there is a broad politics, generally named liberalism or progressivism, that contains different parts. Liberalism means populist opposition to corporate greed and irresponsibility. But it can also mean support for tax increases, abortion and affirmative action. Bush won in 1988 because he defined Dukakis' liberalism in terms of "heightened concerns about race and taxes," while Dukakis was not able to counter this definition by sufficiently emphasizing the populist side of liberalism. "Liberals cannot win without underlining the populist current of their message," Greenberg and Lake write.

**Fear of taxes:** In stressing economic rather than military security, Greenberg and Lake's political prescriptions square perfectly with the kind of policies advocated by the *World Policy Journal*. Greenberg and Lake also suggest the kind of liberalism they describe commands a political majority.

But their own polling on public attitudes toward liberalism belies this optimism and suggest that *World Policy's* program could run into significant political obstacles. There is considerable public support for a "negative populism" that attacks corporations, the wealthy and foreign competitors. But there is less backing for the kind of liberal government intervention envisaged by *World Policy* and by Greenberg and Lake.

In their polling of over 1,500 voters, Greenberg and Lake found strong support among conservative and moderate Democrats for tough trade policies and for taxing the wealthy and corporations and enforcing environmental regulations against corporate polluters, but they also found resistance to any program that requires new expenditures and that might lead to new taxes. According to Greenberg and Lake, "a majority of the Reagan Democrats turned against [liberal

programs] rather than risk higher taxes."

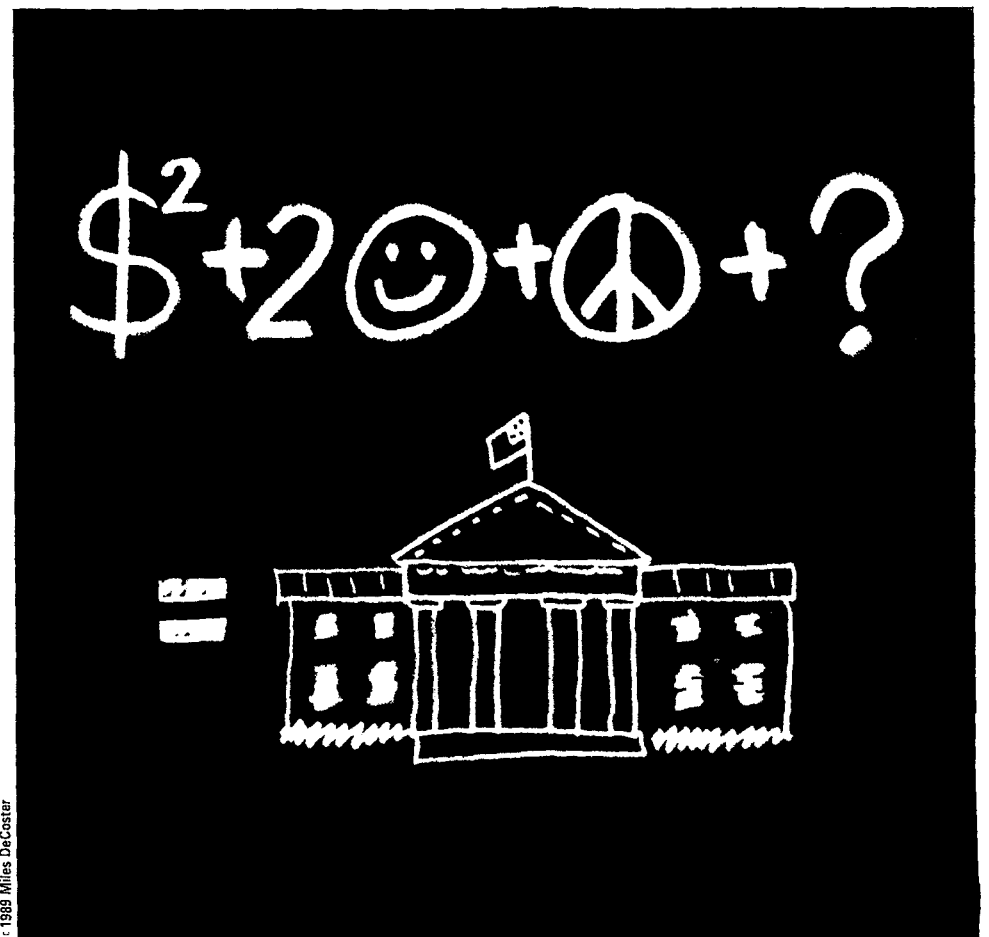
The two pollsters report that middle-class Democrats reject liberal programs both out of a fear of new taxes and because they believe that the programs will benefit not them, but only minorities and the poor.

These findings suggest significantly less than majority support for an active-government liberalism. In terms of the *World Policy* manifesto, moderate and conservative Democrats might support spending \$9 billion to expand Superfund to clean up more waste dumps, but they would reject spending \$16 billion on compensatory, handicapped, and bilingual education or \$5 billion on Head Start.

The *World Policy* signatories could argue, of course, that by freeing up funds formerly used for the Cold War, Democrats could ease middle-class anxieties about paying for "investment" programs that help minorities and the poor, such as inner-city education and rapid transit. But Americans' qualms about active-government liberalism predate and will survive the Cold War, and, as Greenberg and Lake show, moderate and conservative Democrats are not yet convinced that military spending should be significantly reduced.

Greenberg, Lake and the *World Policy* signatories represent only a minority within the Democratic Party and the country. Democrats themselves are divided over what liberalism means. They disagree sharply about trade policy, military spending and corporate regulation. There are also significant strains between Democratic constituencies.

The real question about *World Policy's* program is not whether it represents a majority, but whether the conditions exist, over the next decade or even two, for creating such a majority. Certainly, the change in Soviet-American relations and American economic decline provide a basis for the kind of program that *World Policy* advocates. But significant political obstacles persist, and pollsters can't answer whether they will be overcome. That can be done only through a concerted effort at organization, education and agitation. □



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By Joel Bleifuss

## The danger of a poor education

According to the United Negro College Fund, "A mind is a terrible thing to waste." So it was Vice President Dan Quayle who turned out May 4 to kick off the group's TV fundraising campaign. As Quayle told the gathered crowd: "A child without education is essentially a child without hope or opportunity. You take the UNCF motto: What a waste it is to lose one's mind or not to have a mind as being very wasteful. How true that is."

## Grand Old Party

Dan Quayle recently sent a letter to liberal economist John Kenneth Galbraith inviting him to join the "Republican Senatorial Inner Circle." Galbraith was nominated to the Inner Circle by wisecracking Sen. John Chafee (R-RI). According to *Harper's*, the 5,000 people inside that circle, all of whom have been nominated by GOP senators, are each expected to contribute at least \$1,000 to the Republican cause.

**Quayle wrote:** "To welcome you to the Inner Circle, Marilyn and I would like to personally invite you to the vice president's residence on Monday, April 10, for a private cocktail party during our upcoming spring briefing ... when you'll be participating in closed-door strategy sessions that will give you an insider's look at the Bush administration's legislative game plan.... In something truly unique to the Inner Circle ... you'll be an honored guest at a dinner hosted by a Republican senator, Cabinet member or administration official.... I look forward to meeting you on April 10."

**Galbraith replied:** "I make haste to accept. I also note with pleasure your invitation to dinner on April 10. There are one or two things that do trouble me about this invitation that I'm sure you will clear up. You mention that there will be 'closed-door' briefings.... This could mean that I will be the recipient of privileged information not available to the public at large ... [raising] the serious possibility that some business participants will be getting information for their own privileged enrichment.... This I am sure you will think distressing. Again, thinking of that reference to the 'closed door,' I wonder if some of those so selected may be paying money for this privilege, even though you have no intention of offering it. Doesn't this put you in a no-win situation? Either you are offering information for money-making purposes that is not available to the public at large or you are guilty of a certain fraud in giving the impression that there will be such advantage. I do hasten to assure you that this does not trouble me in a personal way. I am not in business and will, of course, avoid making a [monetary] contribution.... I can make a wholesome contribution. Specifically I would like to offer you editorial guidance in your literary activities, however modest, as vice president.... I will counsel you against ... use of the split infinitive.... I will urge you to avoid modifying the word 'unique': something is either unique or it is not."

## Wild hairs

West German government scientists have come up with a method of laboratory analysis that could be a new weapon in the war on drugs. According to the Paris-based bimonthly *Intelligence Newsletter—the World of Spies*, chemical deposits in hair, like growth rings on trees, make it possible, through a variety of laboratory methods, to track the chemical history of a person with far greater precision than either blood or urine analysis.

## Poor Mexico ... so close to Negroponte

Mexico may be spared. *In These Times* has learned from a Senate source that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is considering killing the nomination of John Negroponte as ambassador to Mexico by refusing to put his name up for a vote. The committee, and Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-RI) in particular, has questions about Negroponte's role in the latest chapter of the still-unfolding Iran-contra scandal. It appears that in February and March 1985 the Reagan administration bribed—let's eschew obfuscation, as George Bush says, there was no quid pro quo—the Honduran government of President Roberto Suazo Cordova into helping the contras wage war against Nicaragua. The infamous 42-page document released last month in the North trial implicates both Negroponte, then-U.S. ambassador to Honduras, and Bush as the officials who personally finalized the \$130 million deal with Suazo in Tegucigalpa. (See "In Short" April 19.) In its lobbying effort



The University of Massachusetts at Amherst has erupted in protest over Pentagon sponsorship of chemical and biological warfare research at university laboratories. Above, police handcuff a student for trying to block a bus in front of the Graduate Research Center. Below, a member of the Republican Club acts out a fantasy. Since most major universities receive similar monies, the Amherst protests could very well harbingering the next campus crusade.

## Chemical and biological warfare research activates UMass students

In 1979, when the defense industry was gearing up for a Reagan victory and presumed increases in military spending, the military contractor United Technologies adopted an interoffice slogan that signaled the

wave of the future: "N.B.C.," nuclear, biological and chemical defenses. In 1988 the U.S. spent about \$220 million for research and development of biological and chemical defense programs, 400 percent more than was spent in 1980. Much of the money goes to U.S. universities. But at one such university, in actions reminiscent of the anti-apartheid movement, students are saying, "No thanks."

This year Professor Curtis Thorne

of the University of Massachusetts in Amherst (UMass) got \$86,090 of that funding to support his 23-year quest for a better anthrax vaccine. Anthrax, an infectious disease that usually affects sheep, is a potential biological weapon. Although the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention strictly forbids its more than 100 signatories, of which the U.S. is one, from developing biological weapons, Thorne and the university maintain that their work is purely defensive



in nature. But alarm over the anthrax vaccine's potential use in combat warfare has provoked the Amherst American Friends Service Committee and the local Physicians for Social Responsibility to call for Amherst to be declared a "biological warfare research-free zone."

"The study at that university could be applied to offensive as easily as defensive use," says Charles Pillar, author of *Gene Wars* and an expert on chemical and biological warfare research. "Any attack with a biological weapon must be accompanied by a vaccine for the aggressor troops."

The U.S. Army denies any such connection. Army spokesperson Chuck Dacey says, "It is erroneous to characterize this as biological warfare research." The Defense Department insists that the discovery

of better vaccines for anthrax and dengue, another potentially genocidal virus being studied at UMass, is intended to help troops avoid contracting those diseases where they naturally occur. However, the range of anthrax viruses is so great that it is impossible to predict which strain of a disease might be encountered by troops. "Basically the logic and structure of the program are not well suited to an effective defensive program," Pillar said. "One has to ask the question, what is it well suited to?"

Calling for a halt to all Defense Department research at the university, 100 supporters of the student group People for a Socially Responsible Universe (PSRU) rallied on campus April 24. Thirty-five students occupied Memorial Hall, home to the alumni and development offices,

overnight. Since then there have been three further occupations of university buildings that have led to a total of 152 arrests. Most recently, 250 students and supporters occupied the Graduate Research Center, an action for which 19 students were suspended.

Each year UMass receives \$12 million from the Pentagon. According to PSRU, \$200,000 of that goes to chemical and biological warfare research. UMass does forbid professors from conducting research in secret. But at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which receives a lion's share of Pentagon funding, there is no such stipulation. Students there are sometimes left in the dark about the ultimate aim of their own research projects.

—Jessica Jiji

## Fruits and nuts—rain forest saviors?

BOSTON—The scoop for ice cream lovers is that they can do a little something to save the Amazon rain forest while sampling a couple of exotic new flavors from Ben & Jerry's.

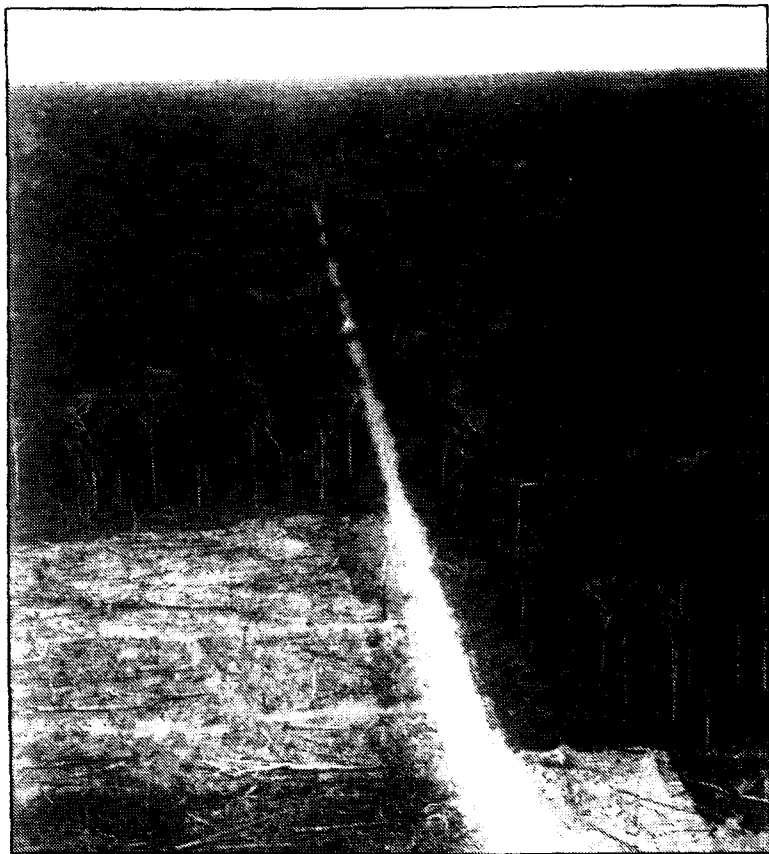
Starting this summer, the profitable and politically correct Vermont ice cream makers will feature the flavors of Brazil nuts and the tropical fruits cupuacu and asai. The Brazil nut flavor is expected to be called "Rainforest Crunch."

Cultural Survival, a Cambridge, Mass., organization that supports threatened ethnic groups, plans to sell up to \$2 million in Brazilian fruits and nuts to Ben & Jerry and other manufacturers. According to Cultural Survival Director Jason Clay, the group hopes eventually to import \$50 million a year in rain-forest products such as oils, resins, honey, pigments, fibers and even orchids.

Cultural Survival's brand of multinational capitalism is geared to benefit the rain forest and its inhabitants. Rubber tappers, the impoverished Amazonians who gather latex and other forest products, stand to benefit most from Cultural Survival's venture.

The group plans to encourage the workers to organize themselves into associations that would sell directly to Cultural Survival. Currently, rubber trappers deal with merchants who run "trading post" operations. The rubber tappers buy retail goods from the merchants at high prices and go into debt. They are then vulnerable to price gouging when they sell raw forest products to the same merchants. Cultural Survival plans to cut out as many of these middlemen as possible.

Cultural Survival normally focuses on the survival of ethnic groups, not environmental issues. But in this case the human and environmental merge. By helping rain-forest dwellers take more control of their resources, Cultural Survival hopes to help save the rain forests. Clay says that the project should convince



debt-ridden South American governments that the rain forests are worth more in their natural state than when cleared as cattle pastures for the meat industry. "The more valuable you make a living rain forest," he says, "the harder it is for a government to justify cutting it down."

The idea of importing rain-forest products is not new. It is just that it is now made possible by the existence of enlightened businesses like Ben and Jerry's.

Cultural Survival's rain-forest project dates back to last September's Grateful Dead benefit concert at New York City's Madison Square Garden for Greenpeace, Rainforest Action Network and Cultural Survival. At a party after the concert, two people asked Clay what they could do to help save the rain forests. The two were ice cream makers Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, so Clay told them, "Make a rain-forest ice cream."

Since then the project has moved quickly. Clay went to Brazil and brought back hundreds of pounds of sample rain-forest products. This summer Ben & Jerry's will test-market the new flavors in their shops,

using about five tons of fruit and nuts to make 140,000 gallons of ice cream. The partners think the flavors should go over best in cities like Miami and New York, where large Hispanic populations have a taste for tropical fruit flavors.

Cultural Survival products (others are on-line) will be sold under the registered trademark of a palm tree. The palm tree mark will assure consumers they are buying products collected in an environmentally sound, sustainable operation—one that does not threaten the rain forests or exploit the workers. Cultural Survival plans to use a small portion of the income from the venture to monitor and sue any imitators who would exploit the symbol.

The rest of Cultural Survival's profits will be used to create more sustainable development projects. Clay hopes to expand the rain-forest business from Brazil to other countries in South America, even to other parts of the world. For example, Madagascar, which produces the highest-grade vanilla in the world, is ripe for similar grass-roots development projects.

—Mark Feinberg

against the nomination, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA), a Washington-based think tank, has prepared two damning reports on Negroponte—a former Henry Kissinger aide in Vietnam who acted as Honduran head of state from 1981 to 1985. According to the report, "No ambassador who served in Latin America during the Reagan presidency better symbolizes the policies of intervention in and disrespect for a country's institutions and independence than Negroponte." As a Western diplomat told *Newsweek* in 1983, "I am not saying that the guy who gives all the orders here, even for [CIA] covert ops, is Negroponte, but that guy wears Negroponte's suits and eats his breakfast. Do you get the picture?"

**Our boy:** In 1982, Negroponte forced—or enticed—Suazo to name a young colonel, Gustavo Alvarez Martinez, as head of the Honduran armed forces. To do this Suazo bypassed military regulations that such an appointee must be a general of at least 50 years of age. He then forced Alvarez' appointment through the Honduran legislature. During a heated debate on the matter, Suazo explained, "It is a request from the [U.S.] Embassy that I am unable to deny." Negroponte needed the intensely anti-communist Alvarez to help facilitate the contra's war against Nicaragua. A ranking Honduran military official told *Newsweek* in 1982, "[U.S. officials] discuss what should be done, and then Alvarez does what Negroponte tells him to do."

**His death squad:** Alvarez learned his trade in Argentina in the '70s under the tutelage of the generals' military intelligence apparatus. In 1981 he created and the CIA trained Battalion 316, a secret military unit that, according to COHA, has been implicated in almost all of the 130 documented cases of opposition figures who were either murdered or disappeared during the general's reign. Florencio Caballero, a deserter from Battalion 316, has testified he was at a planning meeting at which Alvarez ordered his men to detain, interrogate and then kill Rev. James Carney, a Catholic priest from St. Louis. According to the deserter, in September 1983 Carney was detained in El Aguacate, the contra resupply base, where he was drugged, questioned and then thrown out of a Honduran army helicopter alive. In 1988 Caballero told *The Nation* that U.S. personnel attended the meeting where Carney's murder was discussed. He said there is "not the slightest doubt" that the U.S. knew of Carney's detention and execution. "because members of the CIA and Pentagon instructors training the contras were at the place where [Carney] was held." In its defense, the Honduran army says Father Carney entered Honduras with a band of Sandinista guerrillas and starved to death in the jungle—an explanation to which Ambassador Negroponte added his official endorsement. Alvarez was ousted in 1984, largely because he failed to share his CIA spoils with his fellow officers. He was assassinated in Tegucigalpa earlier this year.

**Raison d'état:** So why does Bush want to name a man like Negroponte ambassador to Mexico, the U.S.' most strategic Latin American neighbor? According to COHA, "The ominous thought arises that perhaps [Negroponte] is being rewarded by President Bush for remaining silent on the role that they played in Honduras in 1985." Or it could just be, as Bush sees it, that Negroponte is a natural for the job—having cut his teeth on Honduras, he is now ready for the whole enchilada.

## Low priority

In the last 24 hours about 40,000 children, most of them under five, have died in the world. More than 80 percent of those deaths are from preventable diseases like tetanus, measles, whooping cough, acute respiratory infection and diarrhea. Such deaths are often associated with malnutrition. The above figure adds up to about 14 million dead children per year. These are just a few of the facts about children to be found in the April issue of the London-based *New Internationalist*, which this month is devoted to the world's children. Other facts to be found in the issue include:

- Of the 14 million children that die each year, five million leak their lives away in a pool of diarrhea.
- In the Third World more than 10 million cases of infant malnutrition and diarrhea are caused by mothers who cease to breast-feed.
- A boycott has been called against two multinational infant formula makers, Nestlé and American Home Products. Nestlé makes products under the following labels: Carnation, Cain's, Crosse & Blackwell, Libby, Toll House and Beech-Nut foods. American Home Products owns these labels: Anacin, Chef Boy-ar-dee, Easy Off, Black Flag, Dristan, Preparation H and Woolite.



By Salim Muwakkil

IT'S NOT HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY SUPPORT for the death penalty is becoming as American as apple pie. The specter of criminal anarchy grows daily as a new order of drug-fueled violence threatens to overwhelm society's capacity. In this menacing atmosphere, the embrace of capital punishment offers a comforting illusion of control.

But according to Amnesty International USA (AI), the price of that illusion is the very

## CRIME

values that make society worth protecting. "Whatever purpose is cited, the idea that a government can justify a punishment as cruel as death conflicts with the very concept of human rights," says Magdaleno Rose-Avila, the director of AI's death penalty project.

Although opposition to capital punishment has always been one of AI's fundamental principles, the 29-year-old human rights group recently decided to energize its efforts to abolish the practice. "There is clearly a movement toward democratization at large in the world, and we thought this would be a good time to emphasize the most fundamental issue of human rights: whether the state has the right to deliberately deprive someone of life," says Rose-Avila.

Since the U.S. is one of only two NATO countries (Turkey is the other) that continue to execute prisoners, it attracts a special focus. "The U.S. is supposed to be leader of the democratic countries, but it is way behind on this issue," notes Judy Hatcher of AI's Chicago office.

**Lonely democracy:** Indeed, the U.S. is the only Western democracy not to have abolished the death penalty. What's more, U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist is urging a curtailment of the judicial safeguards that protect those scheduled to die by the state's hands. Rehnquist appointed a group of judges to evaluate habeas corpus—the right to demand a hearing before a judge on the grounds of false imprisonment—after making explicit his objections to the writ's role in challenging capital convictions.

In the 1972 *Furman vs. Georgia* case, the Supreme Court invalidated all the states' differing death penalties as "arbitrary and capricious" and constituting "cruel and unusual punishment." That ruling forced a moratorium on executions until 1976, when the top court reinstated capital punishment under stricter guidelines in *Gregg vs. Georgia*. Since 1976, 38 states have reinstituted capital punishment. The death penalty law in one of those states, Illinois, was recently struck down by a federal judge for being "arbitrary and capricious." But Illinois state officials are confident that an appeal will reverse that ruling.

Amnesty International, recipient of the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize, is an independent organization working impartially for human rights around the world. The organization was not well known in this country until recently, but it is now riding a wave of popularity.

"Our membership has doubled in the last year," explains Hatcher, "and much of that growth can be traced to the increased visibility we received at various international rock concerts." Hatcher says AI will use its new



The electric chair: seating mainly reserved for the poor, powerless and non-white.

## The death penalty and the illusion of justice

popularity to focus more public attention on the death penalty's inherent injustices.

AI's campaign against capital punishment makes the following arguments:

- capital punishment is applied unfairly;
- it is irreversible;
- it is not a crime deterrent;
- it is even more costly to the taxpayer than life imprisonment without parole;
- it is inhumane in its application.

"We are fundamentally and philosophically against the death penalty, because it is the ultimate violation of human rights,"

**In all cultures, the death penalty is generally reserved for the poor and powerless. People in power always find scapegoats.**

explains Rose-Avila. "But for many blacks and Hispanics it's also a civil rights issue."

**The race factor:** Rose-Avila says that of the 580 men hanged for rape in modern times, 525 of them were blacks who raped white women. Yet although sexual exploitation of black females has long been an open social secret—African-Americans' varied skin shades provides vivid proof of past interracial couplings—never has a white man been executed for raping a black woman.

Also, according to a 1983 study conducted by University of Iowa sociology professor

David Baldus, a killer of a white victim in Georgia was 4.3 times more likely to receive the death penalty than the killer of a black victim. In the case of state executions, "race often determines who lives and who dies," says Michael Radelet, a University of Florida sociologist and noted capital punishment specialist.

In a statement delivered during an April 25 AI news conference in Kansas City, Radelet said, "The research by Professor Baldus in Georgia and by myself and others in Florida and other states has demonstrated that race predicts death sentences better than smoking predicts heart disease."

"Until the historical legacy of racism in America is overcome," Radelet added, "Americans will continue to be born with unequal chances of ultimately dying at the hand of the executioner." Rose-Avila says that no white killers of blacks were among the 107 people executed since 1977.

Some researchers allege that no white offender has ever been executed for killing a black victim, but Rose-Avila disputes that claim. Although he says exact numbers are impossible to determine, "there are rare cases of white offenders executed for murdering a black victim—but they are very rare," he says. "It's generally the poor and powerless who get the death penalty in all cultures. People in power always find scapegoats. No matter what society you look at, the ones on the bottom are the ones who are most likely to be executed."

**Oops:** Another death penalty flaw noted by the AI campaign is that innocent people are sometimes executed. That possibility was highlighted recently by the case of James

Richardson, who was released from prison after a judge ruled prosecutorial misconduct and perjured testimony had tainted his 1968 conviction for the poisoning deaths of his seven children. Richardson was scheduled for execution in 1972, just before the Supreme Court ruled against the states' death penalties.

A 1987 study by Radelet and Tufts University philosophy professor Hugo Bedau documents 350 cases in which innocent people were convicted of capital crimes—23 of whom were eventually executed. And these cases are not simply artifacts of history, Radelet said at the Kansas City news conference.

"We found that of all the decades in this century, the '70s ranked second in the number of errors," he said. "Indeed, we now know of approximately 30 men who were sentenced to death after 1972 who have been released from death row after the state itself admitted error."

**No deterrent:** Capital punishment proponents continue to insist that the death penalty deters and reduces violent crimes, despite overwhelming evidence that it does neither. Scores of researchers have in recent years analyzed crime statistics for evidence that capital punishment favorably affects the crime rate. But after reviewing many of these studies in 1976, the Supreme Court found no conclusive evidence that the death penalty actually deters violent crime.

A just-released AI report notes that although Texas and Florida had the highest number of executions and prisoners on death row in 1983 and 1984, both states were among those with the highest murder rates in the nation in 1985. "If the death penalty were a deterrent," it states, "death penalty states predictably would have lower murder rates than non-death-penalty states. Just the opposite is true."

In some cases, AI officials say, the use of the death penalty may actually increase the crime rate. "Remember, the death penalty offers potential murderers some fame and attention," notes Rose-Avila. "Also, there's the very real possibility that legal executions may provoke violent crime by sanctioning the most extreme form of violence."

Even those worshipers of the bottom line can find something to hate in the death penalty: the cost of executions far exceeds that of life imprisonment. Due to the complex and costly legal maneuvering and appeal procedure necessitated by the high standard of due process in capital offense, added expense is required to maintain the maximum security of death row. According to an AI report, the *Miami Herald* found that Florida taxpayers paid an average of \$3.2 million per execution—six times as much as its costs on average to incarcerate a person for life. It cost \$10 million to kill mass murderer Ted Bundy. Other states bear similar expenses. In fact, the Kansas legislature decided not to reinstate the death penalty based largely on economic reasons.

Despite these cogent arguments, Amnesty International and the other organizations battling to abolish capital punishment are bucking a powerful trend. Tough-talking politicians find that backing the death penalty does wonders for their macho quotient. And capital punishment supporters contend that, if nothing else, executing criminals exacts a measure of social retribution. That, they say, is reason enough. □



By Kevin Kelly

DALLAS

**T**EXAS AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER JIM Hightower emerged from obscurity last year when he became the only white elected state-level official in the country to endorse Democratic presidential hopeful Jesse Jackson. When Hightower addressed the Democratic National Convention in July, he left the national party asking who was this glib young populist from Texas and how could they get more of him. At one point the slight, mustachioed Texan predicted: "Running against George Bush will be more fun than eating ice cream naked."

Now some Democrats, especially the agricultural interests, want a whole lot less of Hightower. In February Hightower was condemned by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the 325,000-member Texas Farm Bureau when he encouraged farmers to raise hormone-free cattle after the European Economic Community banned the import of U.S. beef treated with growth stimulants. His new proposals to toughen Texas pesticide controls have angered chemical manufacturers and farmers alike. And Hightower's populist agenda petrifies Democrats gone conservative. Says a Texas Democratic insider, "Hightower is trouble."

In Texas a coalition of farmers, manufacturers and politicians from both parties have banded together to get Hightower, possibly by killing the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Their vehicle is the Texas legislature, which under state law must review TDA during this session and decide whether to disband the agency. Hightower's opponents are asking the legislature to disband TDA or turn its top spot into an appointed position.

So far the Texas legislature has voted to retain TDA. But on May 10 the Texas House of Representatives, bowing to pressure from Republican Gov. Bill Clements and the chemical industry, voted to remove pesticide control from Hightower's oversight and turn it over to an appointed body. "This puts politics in the back room instead of the front where people can get at it," says Hightower.

The move pleased Clements, whose distaste for Hightower is legendary. Clements still maintains that the agriculture commissioner's spot should be appointed, but he seems mollified by the new structure, which he views as undercutting the power of that "ex-magazine publisher," as he calls Hightower, who once edited the liberal *Texas Observer*.

**Breaking clouds:** Undoubtedly Hightower has made a lot of enemies in Texas. He alienated powerful middlemen by organizing 80 farmers' markets where growers sell directly to the public. He angered farmers and manufacturers by promulgating pesticide controls that require growers to warn neighbors when they're going to spray and to keep 30-year records on pesticide use. And Hightower has confounded old-line farmers by becoming the nation's leading spokesman for "sustainable agriculture," or organic farming.

Hightower has transformed the once stodgy office into a lightning rod for creativity. Last year he opened an Office of Sustainable Agriculture to encourage farmers to cut back pesticide use and diversify crops. The office certifies organic farmers and stamps their produce. Already 60 farmers have signed on, and 500 more have applied.

Last year the TDA urged cotton farmers to synchronize the planting, harvest and plowing under of their crop. This, says TDA officials, would provide less food for the boll weevil and therefore require fewer chemi-

# Populist Jim Hightower is riling the right folks

icals. Needless to say, the campaign angered the Texas chemical industry, which lobbied hard to take pesticide oversight out of TDA's hands.

Sustainable agriculture isn't a passing fancy for Hightower. The market for organic foods, he points out, reached \$3 billion last year. Moreover, Texas farmers, like their counterparts in other states, have run up big

## TEXAS POLITICS

debts buying tractors and chemicals. These debts threaten to ruin the family farm, leaving farming to big corporations, anathema to populist Hightower.

To many farmers Hightower just seems quirky. The \$11 billion Texas agricultural economy was built on cotton, wheat and cattle. But Hightower, 45, routinely advocates raising organic tomatoes. As the battle over TDA rages, he's found time to address conferences on the virtues of pesticide-free crops. While crop diversification makes good sense, his suggestions to raise blueberries, Christmas trees and crayfish sound strange to many. "He's not a farmer," says one Lubbock-based cotton grower. "He just has a bunch of crazy ideas."

If Hightower gets a chance he might just make inroads. Younger farmers seem to idolize him for his sharp statements support-

ing more price supports and his ideas about crop diversification. Rex Neitch, a 28-year-old Crosby County cotton farmer, hopes to diversify into cattle. "Hightower's the first ag commissioner to show us how to survive," he says.

**Cultivating the voters:** Agriculture shouldn't be Hightower's strong suit. He earned his political spurs managing Texas Sen. Ralph Yarborough's office. He then ran Oklahoma Sen. Fred Harris' brief 1976 presidential campaign, after which he took over the *Texas Observer*. (He jokes that he made Fred Harris what he is today—a college professor in Albuquerque.)

While at the *Observer* he organized the Agribusiness Accountability Project and wrote a book entitled *Hard Tomatoes, Hard Times*. Despite this foray, he ran for a seat on the Texas Railroad Commission—which oversees the state's oil industry—in 1980 and lost. In 1982 he won the top spot at TDA.

Hightower maintained his hold on the office by crafting a durable urban-rural alliance advocating higher crop prices and limits on pesticide use. Though he has never farmed, Hightower successfully cultivated the image by donning a cowboy hat and snakeskin boots. In 1986 he was re-elected with 60 percent of the vote.

Hightower's currently using all his political acumen to save his job. "This is a blood

war," he says. Hightower is trying to stir up support among consumer groups and farm workers by pointing his finger at the Texas chemical industry. He's also hoping to turn popular discontent with Gov. Clements to his favor. After all, he says, Clements "isn't too tightly wrapped on his best of days."

But Hightower may be a hostage of national trends. His advocacy of price supports for farmers finds little favor in either Washington, D.C., or the state capital of Austin where politicians are more concerned with deficits than farm subsidies. Moreover, his espousal of populist programs, including higher taxes and easy credit, places him at odds with the Democratic Party leadership.

While some party leaders have traveled to Austin to support him, Hightower's fight has mainly been a lonely one. Thirty Democrats deserted Hightower in the crucial House vote. Other Texas progressives—like gubernatorial candidate Jim Mattox—have stayed in the background.

Despite his travails, Hightower refuses to back down on his populist project. Last year he bowed out of a Senate race against Republican Phil Gramm and dedicated himself to building a statewide populist movement, complete with a speakers bureau and a fund to support candidates.

It's that kind of vision that keeps Hightower from giving up. Ridiculing "Democrats who are afraid to talk like Democrats," he says, "there's nothing in the middle of the road but yellow stripes and dead armadillos."

That's a good populist rallying cry. The next few weeks will determine whether Hightower has a perch to shout it from anymore. □

Kevin Kelly is a Dallas-based journalist who writes on business issues.

Texas Agricultural Commissioner Jim Hightower: getting a bum steer from the fat cats.



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By Jim Naureckas

WASHINGTON

SEVERAL SLIPS OF THE TONGUE BETRAYED Donald Gregg's nervousness at his May 12 confirmation hearing. But one misstatement was particularly revealing of the former Bush aide's state of mind: "Nothing could be farther *than* the truth," he said.

Freudian slips were a major issue at the Senate Foreign Relations Asia subcommittee hearing to consider Gregg's nomination as ambassador to South Korea. The national security adviser to Vice President George Bush produced his long-awaited explanation for why two memos bearing his name told the then-vice president that he would be briefed on "resupply of the contras" at a time when such activity was illegal. The memo was supposed to have read, he claimed, "re-supply of the copters," meaning that Bush was to be told about the need for spare parts for helicopters used in the Salvadoran counterinsurgency.

Even Gregg seemed to realize how lame this sounded. "I don't know how it went over," he said later during his hearing, "but it was the best I could do."

Unfortunately for Gregg, it didn't go over at all with the Democrats on the subcommittee, nor did his other attempts to explain away clear evidence that he helped set up and run the resupply operation that evaded congressional restrictions on contra aid in 1985 and 1986. The Republicans, for their part, gave strong statements in support of Gregg and then left the hearing, knowing that the nominee had dug himself into too deep a hole for them to rescue him.

Gregg's problem is that when the contra

## Former Bush security adviser accused of Freud at the pols

operation was exposed in the fall of 1986, his initial denials were too categorical. He claimed not to know anything of the activities of people he worked with closely and

### IRAN-CONTRA

swore he had never discussed the contras with Bush at all. In a cover-up, it's wise to be as ambiguous as possible until you know what evidence survived.

In Gregg's case, the evidence is extensive, including minutes of meetings that Gregg attended on the subject of resupply of the contras, letters noting that he should be briefed on that matter and testimony by Lt. Col. Oliver North that he told Gregg about resupply of the contras. (No evidence linking Gregg to resupply of the copters has yet been found.) According to Gregg, all the documentary evidence and sworn testimony that contradicts him is simply inaccurate.

Another item Gregg had trouble explaining was his connection to Felix Rodriguez, who ran the contras' supply depot at Ilopango, El Salvador. Gregg, a 31-year CIA veteran, was Rodriguez' boss and mentor in Vietnam, and Gregg still thinks of him as "the most extraordinary CIA comrade I have known." Gregg set him up in El Salvador in December 1985, two months after Congress outlawed contra aid, and helped get him in touch with North and others involved in the arms network. Gregg had long, soul-searching con-

versations with Rodriguez every month.

Yet Gregg said he didn't realize his friend was working with the contras until Rodriguez came to him in August 1986 to tell him that he was supervising a weapons airlift directed by North that was being exploited by renegade CIA agents who were reaping enormous profits. Gregg told the senators that he didn't inform Bush about this conversation at the time; in fact, he said, the vice president only learned about it by reading a *New York Times* interview with Gregg. Gregg said he didn't think the conversation was important because he didn't believe Rodriguez' activities were illegal. This explanation prompted Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) to ask, "Was this anything about this that you thought was legal?"

### Donald Gregg's awkward testimony is likely to doom his chances to become a diplomat.

Gregg's failure to convince the Democrats of his Iran-contra innocence seemed to doom his nomination. The subcommittee chairman, Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA), did not specify when further hearings would be held, but a committee source said that Gregg will definitely get an up-or-down vote. While the committee has given Bush the benefit of the

doubt on several questionable nominations, the source said, the line has been drawn on Gregg and John Negroponte, the nominee for ambassador to Mexico whose links to the contras are also too extensive for the committee to swallow.

Cranston clearly appeared disgusted by Bush's sending of a nominee with Gregg's problems to the Senate. The senator revealed that Gregg had first sought an intelligence job but that "key members of the intelligence community" had vetoed that idea. "Senior Langley professionals" had also discouraged his South Korea appointment.

In his opening statement at the hearing, Cranston harshly criticized the intelligence methods used to conduct executive policy. "Your career training in establishing secrecy and deniability for covert operations...apparently led you to believe you could serve the national interests by sponsoring a freelance covert operation out of the vice president's office," he told Gregg.

This seemingly simple insight—that Iran-contra was a covert operation complete with plausible deniability, cutouts, cover stories and all the other accoutrements designed to protect a covert operation from exposure—escaped most officials who have investigated Iran-contra.

But Cranston's interpretation was rejected by Gregg, who maintained that he had no "operational role" in Iran-contra. When asked by another senator to define "plausible deniability," Gregg answered with a straight face: "That used to be a phrase you heard when I went into the agency in the '50s. ... You don't hear that much anymore."

Jim Naureckas writes regularly for *In These Times* from Washington, D.C.

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By David Moberg

**S**INCE THE BREAKUP OF MA BELL IN 1984, businesses, the telephone companies, telephone workers and Mr. and Ms. Average Phone User have all asked for whom the cracked Bell tolls. The answer: it may ring for all, but it sounds a little different to each.

The court-ordered breakup of the national telephone system sent mixed signals to the typical resident user. With AT&T's divestiture of its regional operating companies and less regulation there has been confusion over long-distance alternatives, multiple bills and a variety of new cheap phones. The average household saved 35-40 percent on its three-to-five weekly long distance phone calls, but paid 40-50 percent more for crucial local service. Some poor families had to give up their phones, and some callers from hotels or other institutions were shocked at bills five times the expected rate from new "alternative operator services." New services delighted some (with call forwarding, call waiting) and angered others (with teenage chat lines, dial-a-porn).

But big businesses have fared well and are likely to do even better in coming years: they've been able to bargain for lower rates and new services. The old theory under regulation, that there should be subsidization of universal local phone service by the more affluent heavy users of long-distance calling, has been completely abandoned, even inverted.

And the telecommunications industry, despite the shakeout of some long-distance firms, has prospered with fast growth and solid profits despite the new competition. The industry posted the fourth-biggest gain among all industries in corporate value in 1988, a 36 percent increase, according to *Business Week*.

**Let's talk:** But telecommunications workers have not fared so well. With a May 27 contract expiration deadline, the Communications Workers of America (CWA)—representing 130,000 workers—and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)—representing 30,000 workers—are now addressing some of those problems at AT&T in the largest single-company union contract talks of the year. Later this summer the unions will negotiate contracts for nearly 400,000 workers at the regional Bell operating companies and other phone companies.

The unions primarily want to defend their good health benefits, raise wages and provide more job security in an era of rapid technological change and corporate restructuring. But they also want corporate support for child care and better working conditions. For example, CWA wants to stop electronic monitoring of workers' performance by supervisors. The union also wants to set health and safety standards for video display terminals, adopting the rules for rest periods and ergonomic design of work stations enacted last year by Suffolk County, N.Y.

Although AT&T's share of long-distance calling has dropped from 83 percent to 67 percent since 1984, the company shrugs off the loss and has fought back with competitive rates. The two remaining big long-distance alternatives, MCI and US Sprint, have lost some of their earlier financial edge as the fees they pay to local telephone systems have been equalized, and all companies have heavily invested in new, faster digital switching systems and fiber optic transmission cables.

Despite the competition, AT&T earned a

# Phone workers get cut off after Ma Bell disconnects

record \$1.8 billion on its long-distance business in 1988, reaping an impressive 20 percent return on equity, analysts estimate. By deciding to write off \$6.7 billion in old equipment last year, the corporation technically lost money but really positioned itself for faster growth. Now the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is changing the way it regulates AT&T. Instead of regulating profits, which has led the FCC to reduce rates in recent years, the FCC will cap prices and let AT&T make as much profit as it can. That's expected to aid big business users and hike AT&T profits, as the company cuts costs and offers bargains to big corporate users. CWA supported the change, which may fatten the pie workers divide. But it may also hurt consumers.

The new technologies should continue to boost revenue per worker, which has grown 30 percent over the past four years. During the same period, nearly 78,000 union jobs have been eliminated (although some of those workers have been transferred to the regional Bells), and workers' pay has risen only 13 percent. Yet AT&T has added 13,600 non-union and management jobs and boosted management pay by 30 percent. Some of AT&T's employment shifts reflect corporate restructuring: increased emphasis on a sales staff, cutbacks in production, service and research and shift of manufacturing to Mexico, Malaysia and other foreign countries.

**Labor hangups:** Although telecommunications industry job loss has stopped, the unions want to reduce the number of temporary and subcontracted jobs, bringing that work under the main contract. They also want a moratorium on plant closings and improved access of union workers to jobs opening up in other divisions of AT&T. In 1986 the company and union set up the Alliance for Employee Growth and Development, a non-profit training corporation that helps all workers, including those facing layoffs, get career educations. Some displaced workers find jobs within AT&T or the regional Bells, but often at lower pay. "It's helpful," said Larry Cohen assistant to CWA President Morton Bahr, "but not at the same level as the problem."

Productivity increases have taken their toll in the workplace, with repercussions for both quality of service and the health of workers. Operators now have 15 to 17 seconds to complete a call, down from 21 seconds less than two years ago, CWA spokesman Steve Rosenthal says. The speedup has increased repetitive-motion injuries to workers who must enter each call at their computer terminals. Denver CWA local

## COMMUNICATION

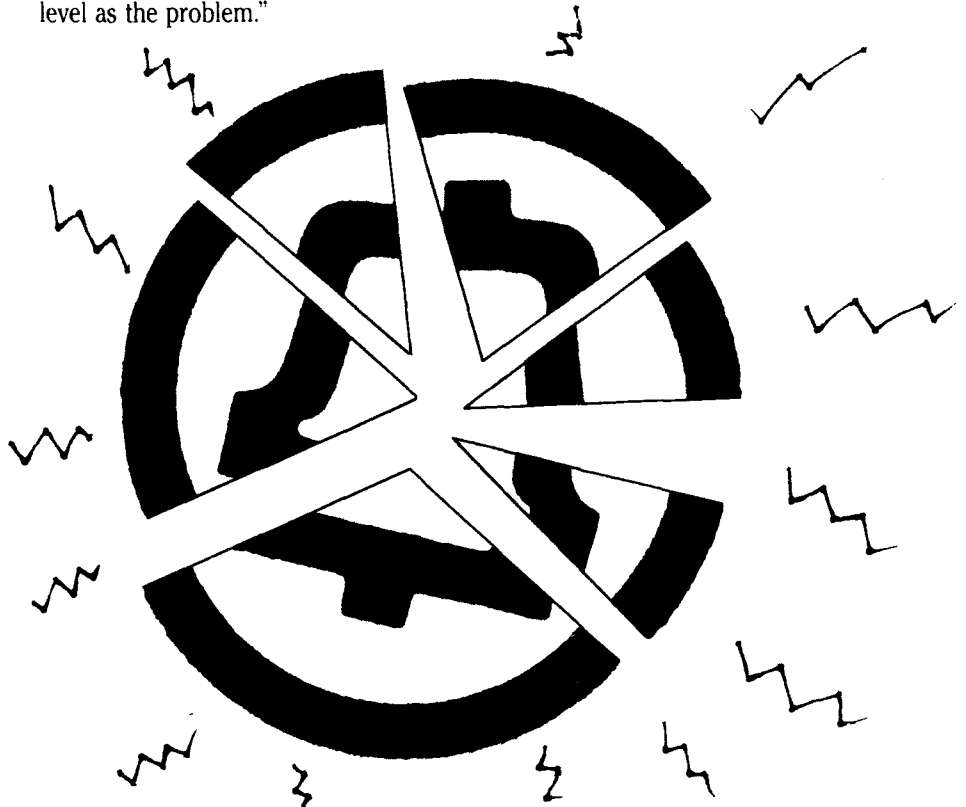
union President Mary Blue said that at one Denver information center, 183 out of 500 workers developed carpal tunnel—severe impairment of the wrist—over three years before union-instigated changes in work design reduced the damage.

Like many corporations, AT&T is concerned about health-care costs that are rising about 10 percent annually. The unions adamantly refuse to shift those burdens to workers. AT&T wants to institute deductibles, co-payments, annual and lifetime caps on benefits and worker payment for part of family health coverage. Bahr has asked AT&T to address the problem by joining the union in fighting for a national health-care system.

While AT&T wants to cut premium pay (such as double time on Sunday) and hold down wages, the unions want to revive their temporarily suspended cost-of-living protection and raise wages. (Operators now average about \$428 a week and skilled installers \$659 a week.) A hefty settlement could help unions generally regain momentum after years of concessions.

**The "electronic picket line":** CWA started preparing for this contract a year ago. It organized every group of 10 workers with a mobilization coordinator, who not

## The 1984 Bell breakup was good for the industry, but not so good for workers.



only has leafleted and informed workers about bargaining issues but also organized protests. Last week AT&T workers showed up on the job with crutches and bandages to demonstrate how they would be hurt by the corporation's health-care cuts. The day before the contract expires, all AT&T workers will literally "stand up for their contract" for five minutes starting at 4:15 p.m. Eastern time.

These and other actions build worker support for the union demands and make the company appreciate worker commitment. "We want to be able to create a sense that we could fight indefinitely [on these issues]," Cohen said. If there is no contract by May 27, the union may not strike immediately. The CWA went on strike over the last two contracts, but the highly automated systems can operate with only management replacements for a while. Strike or not, CWA will establish an "electronic picket line" by asking supporters temporarily to boycott AT&T (dialing 1033-1-area code and number, shifting business to Sprint). In Canada, telephone workers extended "electronic picketing" to include phone banks for jamming key telephone lines.

The telecommunications industry is in the midst of vast technological change. At the same time, AT&T and the Bell companies are rapidly diversifying into as many communications-related areas as they can. The competition may get more fierce if Congress passes legislation lifting some of the restrictions placed on the telephone companies in the breakup decree, permitting the regional Bell operating companies to get into electronic publishing and manufacturing.

Also, the regional Bell operating companies are challenging cable television, hoping that their fiber optic cables will eventually serve as "electronic gateways" to a wide range of telephone, television, data-transmission, home shopping and other services, from temperature controls to fire and police protection.

The Telecommunications Research and Action Center, a consumer advocate, doesn't want telephone users to subsidize these expansions or the phone companies to have control over content of cable or other programming. Instead the center wants new fiber optic lines to remain a "common carrier" open to all transmissions regardless of content, as the phone lines are now. CWA is ready to support some diversification, but not others, depending on "what makes economic sense and what protects workers," Cohen said. CWA would back expanded operator services but frown on permitting Bell South to slap its label on a Singapore-made phone.

**Ringin' flat:** The big question may not be how the fragmented, deregulated telecommunications system serves one or another constituency, but how well it functions as a system. Two recent books, *Wrong Number: The Breakup of AT&T* by Alan Stone and *The Irony of Regulatory Reform* by Robert Britt Horwitz, both contend that before the breakup AT&T was a fairly good, innovative, balanced system. It was a small triumph of "industrial policy" that was broken up for political reasons, largely as a result of some—mainly, but not exclusively, business—users' attempts to bypass the system. Horwitz concludes that deregulation-induced efficiencies may undermine the system as a whole and have already undercut democratic influence on communications policy. Telephone workers were simply among the first losers from the Bell breakup. □

IN THESE TIMES MAY 24-JUNE 6, 1989 9



By Diana Johnstone

## New Caledonia killings upset self-rule accord

**Y**ASSIR ARAFAT HAD JUST COMPLETED HIS two-day official visit to Paris, and France was braced for a terrorist riposte by enemies of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leader. But the shock of violence that occurred had nothing to do with the Mideast. It happened far away in the French South Pacific island territory of New Caledonia. Jean-Marie Tjibaou, the leader of the indigenous Melanesian Kanak people seeking independence from France, and his closest deputy, Yeiwené Yeiwené, were gunned down by militants within their own movement.

Practically everyone agreed that this was the worst thing that could have happened to New Caledonia. Tjibaou, 53, was widely admired for his prudent leadership of the original autonomy party, the Caledonian Union, and the more militant umbrella Socialist Kanak National Liberation Front (FLNKS) founded in 1984. A former Catholic priest of deeply pacifist temperament and convictions, Tjibaou had managed to lead the FLNKS away from violence toward a peaceful compromise with the pro-French white settlers.

The parallel with Arafat struck everyone. Nothing is so dangerous for a liberation movement leader as to try to make peace.

However, the parallel has its limits. The cultural gap between the Kanaks and the white settlers—*Caldoches*—is immeasurably greater than between Israelis and Arab Palestinians. The New Caledonia political situation is a classic colonial triangle involving an indigenous conquered people, white settlers who exploit their advantages and a metropole, France, torn by conflicting motives of exploitation, indifference and a desire to be fair.

The will to fairness surfaced in the '80s after the election of Socialist President François Mitterrand. As delegate to the territory Mitterrand sent a distinguished public servant, Edgar Pisani, who worked out a compromise project for "independence-association."

Although designed to keep an "independent" New Caledonia linked to France, the Pisani project was favorable enough to the Kanaks to be viciously and unremittingly attacked by the *Caldoche* right. Mitterrand watered down the Pisani plan.

Still, the Socialists set up a regional system allowing the Kanaks to practice self-government in the regions where they had a majority, leaving the capital Noumea to the pro-French settlers. When the right returned to office in Paris in 1986, Premier Jacques Chirac's delegate Bernard Pons hastened to tear down the compromise and restore full power to the local right-wing branch of Chirac's party, the Rally for Republican Caledonia (RPCR). The RPCR enjoys support from the big nickel mining interests that have long dominated the territory's economic life, as well as from a majority of the less prosperous *Caldoches* and settlers of other races. The RPCR even boasts a few "token" Kanaks.

**Against the odds:** Cornered in the islands with a large and hostile RPCR, the FLNKS strategy in the '80s was to seek support from the left in France, for the Kanaks are less than 43 percent of the New Caledonia population of 145,000. Tjibaou demonstrated his pacifist nature in December 1984, when



Peacemaker Jean-Marie Tjibaou: his murder has produced consternation.

he called for calm after the assassination in Hienghène (the town where he was mayor) of 10 independence militants, including two of his own brothers.

Tjibaou's choice of peace stemmed not only from personal temperament but also from evaluation of the relationship of forces.

### SOUTH PACIFIC

He saw that a community of less than 62,000 people could not afford to wage a war of attrition on an isolated island against a numerically superior population that included many professional military men, veterans of colonial wars itching to massacre Kanaks.

However, the Pons reaction against the Pisani reform drove the Kanak independence movement into total opposition and, tragically, self-defeating violence. On April 22, 1988, 10 days before the French presidential elections, Kanak militants attacked a police headquarters in the sleepy town of Fayaoué on the island of Ouvea. Four gendarmes were killed and 27 were taken hostage.

**Bloody politics:** Conservative media presented the attack as proof of the bestial nature of the Kanak "savages." The reasons for the Ouvea action were obscured. Ostensibly the Kanak militants were holding the hostages to demand talks with the government aimed at changing the Pons reaction. Tjibaou did not take credit for the action, which appeared at the time to be a local excess. However, it now appears that the attack was staged prior to the presidential elections partly as a provocation by forces unknown.

If so, it worked only too well. Premier Chirac, counseled by his tough guy interior minister Charles Pasqua, was piling up spec-

tacular moves on the eve of the election to prove his leadership qualities. Special forces sent to Ouvea had spotted the cave where the hostages were held—a secret, sacred place—and on May 5, between the two rounds of the presidential election, the French army (not the police) attacked the Gossanah cave in a bloody operation that cost 21 lives, two soldiers and 19 Melanesians. Some of the Kanak victims were innocent villagers who had been summoned to serve food and tea to the hostages. One Kanak militant was killed by French soldiers hours after he had been taken prisoner.

**A new balance:** The tough operation backfired politically and, if anything, contributed to Mitterrand's triumphant re-election. The incident served to establish a new relationship of forces in the Kanak-*Caldoche*-France triangle favorable to France, which the new Socialist prime minister, Michel Rocard, hastened to use.

First of all, the Ouvea massacre demonstrated a military relationship of forces overwhelmingly unfavorable to the Kanaks. The original killing of the four gendarmes had been a sign of failure to master the hostage-taking operation. Later, the French military had been able to spot and storm a secret cave in the most remote part of the territory. This did not augur well for a successful Kanak armed liberation struggle.

**Two for peace:** But the Ouvea massacre also demonstrated the political weakness of the hard-line colonialists in relation to the metropole. Though it was technically easy to slaughter Kanaks, France was not ready politically to approve such a massacre. Regional South Pacific reaction also had to be taken into account. Rocard wanted to mend

fences with Australia and New Zealand.

Rocard found two leaders who recognized the double lesson: Tjibaou for the FLNKS, and Noumea businessman and RPCR leader Jacques Lafleur. His health weakened by heart illness, Lafleur was said to be seeking a peaceful retirement with his vast fortune made in nickel mining and real estate. Rocard got Tjibaou and Lafleur to agree on a complex transitional program postponing a final vote on independence until 1998. The program is so complex that it can be interpreted by either side as being in its favor—or as a trap. Lafleur saw the accords as keeping New Caledonia French, while Tjibaou saw them leading to independence. But the two men cooperated daily in seeing that the agreement was respected. Both were accused by members of their own camp of selling out.

The Matignon Accords (named for the Paris residence of the premier) were hailed as a major political success for Rocard, proof that the "Rocard method" of seeking pragmatic compromise could work even in the most difficult of cases. To confirm the Matignon Accords, Rocard insisted on a national referendum last November. This was less successful. Although the accords won 80 percent of "yes" votes, abstention beat all records, especially in New Caledonia itself. There 64 percent voted "no" in Lafleur's own stronghold of Noumea.

Lafleur was attacked constantly by Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, strong among racist white settlers. Kanak criticism of Tjibaou was less visible. Only a few outsiders who had spent time in Ouvea realized the deep scars left by the Gossanah cave massacre. Jubilee Wea, 44, a former Protestant minister and apparent chief of the Wea clan, had not taken part in the attack on the gendarmes but had been among the Gossanah people rounded up and sent to prison in France. He had lost relatives in the assault on the cave. He and other jailed Kanaks were freed under the Matignon Accords, but Wea nursed a bitter resentment. He felt that Gossanah had been used and abandoned by FLNKS leaders.

On May 4, the FLNKS leaders came to Gossanah to take part in the "customs," ceremonies ending the traditional year's mourning period for the people killed in the sacred cave. The mood was one of spiritual meditation. Wea asked the FLNKS leaders to line up beside the grave of the victims so that the local people could greet them. This was not part of the usual ritual, but apparently nobody suspected anything. When Wea came up to Tjibaou and Yeiwené, he pulled out a gun and shot Yeiwené through the head. According to eye-witnesses, a companion then shot Tjibaou dead at point-blank range. One of Tjibaou's bodyguards fatally shot Wea, who shouted with his last breath, "Long live Kanaky! Long live independence!"

Le Pen described Tjibaou as a terrorist who reaped what he had sown. Just about everyone else expressed grief and consternation. With tears in his eyes, Rocard said he had lost a friend. At funeral ceremonies, the prime minister solemnly vowed that the Matignon Accords would be scrupulously carried out, starting with elections scheduled for next month meant as a step toward self-government, despite the long mourning period for Tjibaou and Yeiwené in keeping with Kanak custom.



By Alisa Joyce

BEIJING

**S**OVIET LEADER MIKHAIL GORBACHOV'S historic arrival in this city was all but eclipsed by the drama taking place in downtown's Tiananmen Square. Nearly 3,000 university students from 33 different institutions around the city were participating in a sit-down hunger strike on the square that began on May 13. They were determined to make their demands for greater democracy and free speech known to the world.

They were supported by an estimated 1 million people who took to the streets of Beijing in a tremendous and, as *In These Times* went to press, ongoing display of solidarity.

If the Western media had not converged on the capital in droves to cover the first Sino-Soviet summit in 30 years, the self-sacrificing idealists would have been perhaps no more than a minor news item worldwide. After just one month of street demonstrations and primitive press conferences, these students had grown remarkably camera-savvy and managed to transform the summit into a sideshow.

**History in the making:** Whatever it means in the long run, Tiananmen Square was truly a dramatic sight last week. Chinese Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang was spotted on the roof of the Great Hall of the People on the square's west side the morning of Gorbachov's arrival, surveying the scene. What he saw through his binoculars undoubtedly helped convince the government to make an unprecedented move: they canceled the welcoming ceremony for Gorbachov—21-gun salute, beribboned young pioneers with flowers and all—scheduled to take place on the steps of the people's Great Hall. Instead, the Soviet leader received his honors at the airport, not the most glorious example of Chinese modernization.

Most commentators insisted that the ceremony's cancellation and various other schedule changes in Gorbachov's itinerary resulting from the student protests constitute a serious "loss of face" for the Chinese leadership, especially for China's paramount leader, the aging Deng Xiaoping. The Chinese government places great store on ceremony and protocol, and various government leaders were quoted in the press before the summit imploring students not to "impair the dignity of the motherland" by disrupting the Soviet leader's visit.

As *In These Times* went to press, the Chinese authorities had reacted to the student democracy movement with surprising and unprecedented restraint. While the government showed little sign of giving in to student demands—demands that range from the very concrete, like live nationwide broadcasts of a dialogue between student leaders and government officials, to the fairly vague, like greater freedom of the press and an end to official corruption—the Chinese leaders had not confronted the students with their usual displays of brute force.

As the strike entered its fourth day, however, the Chinese leadership appeared not to have yet fully comprehended the severity of the crisis. Everybody's greatest fear at this point is that one of the students will die before the strike is resolved. One martyr, many believe, will trigger a political crisis unlike any the Chinese Communist Party has ever faced.

On May 16, in an astounding display of emotion and desperation, a senior government minister visited the square and, with tears in his eyes and voice choking, begged

# Students and workers unbow to authority

the students to give up their strike. The government will acknowledge your patriotism, he promised, adding, "Your spirit and bravery have moved the people of this nation." Yet, he said, the government needed more time to "consider" the student demands. The students voted, however, to continue their fast.

**Something's happening here:** The student demands are vague, and it is doubtful whether the government can afford to risk losing its authority by meeting all of the demands. Yet the student movement has accomplished a great deal in its short life. It has changed the political and intellectual climate of the capital, if not the nation. The

## CHINA

younger generation of student intellectuals, bureaucrats and even members of the government-sponsored workers' union are extremely anxious about the hunger strikers, yet almost euphoric about the recent turn of events. People here say they see real progress for the first time since the Revolution. "I've never been so excited in my life," said one cautious and quiet Beijing University professor. "This is the biggest and most successful challenge to the authoritarian regime since 1949."

Among those most excited about the student movement, and most inspired to risk their jobs and political purity by taking part, are Chinese journalists. Zhang Xiaogang, chief of the editorial department of the *China Daily*, the nation's English-language news-

paper, told *In These Times*, "The students are proving to the entire society and the politicians that there is a ready source of power on the street. It is a magnificent event."

The excitement about the student movement was overwhelmingly apparent in the square early last week. Workers from nearby institutions paraded through the supportive crowds of tens of thousands of students, gawkers and onlookers to deliver water to the fasters. As they filed in they were cheered by students and onlookers with a chant of "ganxie, ganxie," or "thank you, thank you." Teachers and journalists wended their way through the prostrate students offering support and shaking hands. On the street, new parades of marching students moved toward Tiananmen, while bus riders and pedestrians flashed a "V" sign with their fingers, smiling and indicating solidarity.

While some of this supportive crowd phenomenon was an exuberant expression of the Chinese national pastime called *shangjie kanrenao*, or "hit the streets and see what's happening," there was genuine empathy among the general populace for the goals and courage of the students. As journalists staked out the site of the negotiations between the students and the government, a curious crowd clustered around. As students entered the ministry building, the anonymous onlookers cheered, shook the students' hands and said thank you.

**Shame, shame, shame:** The student movement has roused the discontented middle class of Beijing. After two and a half weeks of marches, during which the students

accused the Chinese press of printing lies and of distorting their message, young Chinese journalists from the capital joined in the demonstrations on May 4 with their own banners and chants. The students essentially shamed the journalists into joining the movement.

"If we didn't stand up for ourselves this time," said Zhang Weiguo, Beijing bureau chief of the *World Economic Herald*, China's most controversial and progressive journal, "if we abandoned this opportunity to take strength from these students, what hope is there left for this country? What is the use of journalists?"

A new and vibrant press reform movement is thus the second major accomplishment of the student demonstrations, and the results are already apparent. For the past 40 years, all publications in China were basically officially sanctioned, and all carried an official and monolithic party line on events.

"To avoid taking responsibility," explained Zhang of the *China Daily*, "Chinese newspaper editors would look at Xinhua [the Chinese government news agency] first, and then they would write the story. They are more bureaucrats than journalists." On May 5, however, the day following the journalists' and students' march, for the first time in postrevolutionary memory, Chinese newspapers reported the real news.

In the days that followed, while official newspapers maintained fairly discreet coverage of the marches, dialogues and hunger strike, students and intellectuals were nonetheless encouraged by the small but significant changes in what was read nationwide. *China Daily* featured pictures and prominent articles on its front page concerning the student movement each day.

In Tiananmen Square, as students awaited Gorbachov's arrival and the possibility of resolution of their strike, they crowded around journalists from the West and asked persistent and eager questions about the issue of press freedom. "Does the government control what you write?" they wanted to know. "Can you criticize the government in your reports? If you do, will you lose your job? Is the student movement in China a big story for your newspaper?"

Somewhat to their dismay, members of the Western media are viewed here as heroes and comrades in the fledgling democracy movement. Still, the concept of freedom of the press remains a new one for Chinese students. Last week when a camera crew attempted to film an argument between an onlooker trying to enter the hunger strike circle and a student guard, another student guard tried to block the camera with his megaphone, pushing the cameras and the journalists in the process. "Don't shoot bad things like this," the guards insisted. "This will give people a bad impression of our movement."

Most participants and onlookers of this new and dramatic pressure play for more political freedom in China agree that whatever the actual outcome, China has passed a major turning point. The political reforms currently underway in the Soviet Union are, in fact, a powerful example and model for the students and activists to study. Many believe that China is ready for similar political liberalization.

"The Soviets wasted 10 years on Brezhnev," said Zhang Xiaogang, "but we have now jumped the motor of socialism ahead to the next generation of reform." □

Alisa Joyce writes regularly for *In These Times* on Asian affairs.

Demonstrators in Beijing: they made the USSR China summit a sideshow.





# Let Democrats be Democrats

## Vic Fingerhut's cure for the party's identity crisis

By Miles Harvey

**L**ATE IN THE 1968 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, consultant Vic Fingerhut offered candidate Hubert Humphrey some simple advice. Stress your party affiliation, said Fingerhut, and remind voters of the party's record on behalf of working and middle-income Americans. Don't listen to advisers who want to "remake" your image, Fingerhut warned, just *be a Democrat*. Humphrey followed his advice—and dramatically closed the gap on Richard Nixon in the last three weeks of the campaign.

Twenty-one years later—only four of them with a Democrat in the White House—the party finds itself incapacitated by a severe identity crisis. While the Republicans have been winning three consecutive landslide presidential victories, many Democratic leaders have been urging party candidates to out-GOP the GOP in order to woo "liberal Republicans," "yuppies" and "Reagan Democrats." As Michael Dukakis and Walter Mondale proved, however, a donkey trying to imitate an elephant only winds up looking like a big ass.

Vic Fingerhut, on the other hand, has been preaching the same old gospel: let Democrats be Democrats. He urged Jimmy Carter, then Mondale and then Dukakis to cast themselves as strong Democrats—Democrats willing to battle the abuses of big corporations, tax the wealthy, fight for the rights and health of working Americans, protect against foreign competition and take care of senior citizens.

Other Democratic advisers, shell-shocked by the Reagan Revolution, often roll their eyes at such talk. "That's old '30s stuff," they tell Fingerhut.

His reply: "We won in the '30s. Don't you remember?"

Fingerhut, president of Fingerhut/Granados Opinion Research Co., is a unique figure in the nation's capital. He's a Washington insider who is able to maintain an outsider's perspective, a pollster and media consultant who thinks the Democratic Party would be better off listening to working people than to its pollsters and media consultants.

Fingerhut—who polls for a variety of Democratic candidates and labor unions, including the Steelworkers, Machinists and Autoworkers—is worried about the party's polarization of "left/liberal, poor people, blacks vs. Robb-Nunn conservatism." He thinks there's another approach—he calls it populist—that casts the Democrats as the party of middle-income and working Americans and the party that attacks the abuses of corporations.

As part of its ongoing series on the future of the Democratic Party, *In These Times* recently interviewed Fingerhut by phone.

**You've argued that candidates Michael Dukakis and Walter Mondale failed in large part because they did not directly attack Republican programs that benefit corporations and the "super rich." Explain.**

All the polls continue to show that the greatest strength of the Democratic Party, even

at this late date, is that Democrats are best seen as representing ordinary working people. The greatest weakness of the Republican Party is that it is seen as favoring the rich and the big corporations.

It's interesting that even with a very popular president like Ronald Reagan, we were finding that when people were asked, "How's he doing on foreign policy?" he got very high ratings; "How's he doing as a person?" he got very high ratings. But when we asked, "How's he doing standing up to big business and representing ordinary working people?" he got awful ratings, as did Bush during the campaign, and as do the Republicans generally. That is clearly the Republicans' Achilles heel—and I think for good reason, because

### The DEMOCRATS:

#### Planning a party

in fact corporations and the rich are who they represent. It's remarkable to me that the Democrats have failed to zero in on that Achilles heel.

When you put a campaign—or politics generally—in who-represents-whom terms, the Democrats benefit. It's madness for the Democrats not to do that.

**But both Dukakis and Mondale were heavily funded by corporate money and the super rich. As a result they were able to build massive primary organizations and outlast their less-well-off Democratic opponents. How can such candidates then turn around and attack big-money politics in the general election?**

The fact of the matter is that people do believe that the Republicans are controlled by the rich, and they don't believe the Democrats are. Poll after poll continues to show that. We asked, "Which party do you think is best equipped to stand up to corporations?" and "Which party will fight to make sure corporations pay their fair share?" and overwhelmingly people said the Democrats.

So to some degree, regardless of what the facts actually are, they are significantly over-ridden by people's long and deeply held perceptions of the two parties.

**But let's talk about image vs. reality. You say the Democrats need a candidate who says he or she is for working and middle-income people as opposed to corporations. But isn't it more important to have a candidate who actually believes in those things and who has a proven, vocal history of fighting those battles?**

Obviously, that's better. But I think we could draw lines with the Republicans—in terms of Social Security deductibles, plant closings and the Republicans' record on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, for example.

I think any Democratic candidate, with the exception of a few right-wing types who have bad voting records, has legitimate creden-

tials to attack the Republicans on what they're doing to working people—on health and safety, on foreign imports coming in and taking American jobs, on foreign corporations buying out American companies, on the export of jobs to low-wage countries.

On all those things, the Republicans have zero record. And a fair number of Democrats have begun to speak out on those issues. So I think that the Democrats could have credibly made that assault in 1988.

But I totally agree with you that the more chicken the Democrats are on these issues, the less credible they are. And over time, the inheritance of Roosevelt and Truman and Kennedy and Humphrey is going to start wearing thin. Some people think that the more effective Democratic politics is to be wishy-washy, to be middle-of-the-road, not to take a stand on these issues. The fact of the matter is—and I think it's implicit in your question—the tougher, the more defined the Democrats are on these kind of issues, the better it is for them politically. In short, good policy equals good politics—and being chicken, being weak, being accommodationist is going to get the Democrats nowhere. I think they should have learned their lesson over the last few years.

The Republicans draw the lines on their issues—such as national defense and capital punishment—and they don't play for accommodation. On the issues where the public sees them as strong, they draw very strong lines. And they win elections by doing that. The Democrats should be drawing the same strong lines on the issues in which they're strong. If they don't do it, they're going to keep losing elections.

**You've criticized the last three Democratic presidential nominees—Carter, Mondale and Dukakis—for being too concerned with trying to woo "moderate Republicans" and "yuppies." Why?**

First of all, they don't get the moderate Republicans. No Democrat except Lyndon Johnson in 1964 has gotten more than 10

than 8 percent of the Republican vote, and they never get less than 5 percent in nine out of 10 elections. On the other hand, the Democrats have been losing 25 percent to 30 percent of self-identified Democrats. And the Democrats have been comprising 40 percent of the total electorate until fairly recently, so we're talking about the Democrats losing 12 percent of the total electorate.

So in trying to placate these mythological liberal Republicans—1 percent of the electorate—and forgetting about 12 percent of the electorate, they've been going after the wrong target. They've been going where the fish are not. It's just incredibly stupid. And, frankly, they still seem set on doing it.

**The kind of campaign approach you're calling for sounds like the same thing that many on the Democratic Party's left wing have been endorsing for years. Why is the party's right wing—the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), led by Sens. Charles Robb and Sam Nunn—controlling the debate?**

Let me put this thing very straight to you—I'm not advocating a poor people's program for the presidency. I'm talking about working and middle-income people. And that has to be clear. If we elect Democrats on those issues, we can help poor people.

When you start talking about left/liberalism you're talking about a whole mélange of things, some of which get us votes and some of which lose us votes. And the stuff that helps poor voters and minorities, that's important, but it's not the stuff that wins the swing voters that I'm talking about. In fact they go the other way on those issues.

We have to get white working people in the South and the Midwest. They're all for Social Security, Medicare, taxing the big corporations, keeping out foreign imports, long-term care. They're actually all for national health at this point.

But setting up the poles between left/liberal and the Robb-Nunn right-wing approach is wrong because that leaves out a whole other approach. And that is the "populist" approach I advocate—aiming the Democratic Party's message at working and middle-income Americans—which is neither left/liberal, nor is it the Chuck Robb "we've got to make believe we're Republicans" approach.

**Let's talk about the so-called "Reagan Democrats." The DLC and pundits like former Mondale aide William Galston argue that to succeed, the party must bring them back into the fold. But others argue that**

**"Good policy is good politics—and being chicken, being weak, being accommodationist, is going to get the Democrats nowhere. I think they should have learned their lesson over the last few years."**

percent of the self-identified Republicans in the U.S. The Democrats usually average between 3 percent and 8 percent of the Republican vote. And when you consider the fact that up until recently, Republicans only constituted 30 percent of the electorate at best, the Republicans who were likely to vote Democratic constituted less than 1 percent of the overall electorate.

The Democrats have been hypnotized by moderate Republicans—and it doesn't make a difference in the vote. They never get more

such efforts only make Democratic candidates sound like watered-down Republicans.

The Reagan Democrats are not voting Democratic because they're for Robb. My polling shows that the Reagan Democrats are the toughest on keeping out foreign corporations, the Reagan Democrats are tough on Social Security and Medicare, the Reagan Democrats want to stick it to the big corporations. The Reagan Democrats are not rich, conservative, country club types. The people





Vic Fingert: "When you campaign...in who-represents-whom terms the Democrats benefit. It's madness for the Democrats not to do that."

who voted for Reagan but are historically Democrats are with us on the traditional Democratic issues that benefit working and middle-income people—what I call "populist" issues. That's what people don't understand.

The DLC types think these people are going to vote for us if we make believe we're Republicans. That's precisely what's not going to happen.

The Reagan Democrats will vote for us when we act like Democrats. These Reagan Democrats think the greatest presidents in history have been Roosevelt and Kennedy—not Coolidge and Hoover. And that's critical to understand.

This whole issue is of crucial importance in the South, home to a huge percentage of those "Reagan Democrats." Galston and the DLC point out that Southern and border states account for 155 of the 270 electoral college votes needed to win the presidency. Thus they say, the Democrats must reach out to conservative Southern whites. Are they right?

Well that's what Galston did in the 1984 Mondale campaign, and he got his ass kicked. He's had a test of it—it doesn't work.

Instead of talking about the millions of American jobs that were being lost by foreign takeovers and foreign trade, the Mondale campaign avoided the trade issue and talked like Herbert Hoover about balancing the budget. And they got killed. Galston's approach has been absolutely disproven. It's a disaster.

In 1980, I tried to help Carter. But he sat by while Americans lost their jobs in 1979-80, because the Carter people weren't going to do these "old, outmoded, Roosevelt-Truman-Kennedy" things like protect American jobs—either by using trade policy or public works to get people back to work. So he sat by in the spring of 1980 while millions of Americans lost their jobs in the big industrial states and made believe he was a Republican.

I was on an advisory group for the Carter campaign chaired by former Democratic Na-

tional Committee Chairman Robert Strauss. The committee met with Carter's Treasury secretary, G. William Miller, in 1980, and I told him "Mr. Secretary"—I was trying to be polite—"I know you have big problems with inflation, etc. But a million working people, mostly Democrats, have lost their jobs in the key industrial states in the last six months, and we've got to do something to get them back to work."

And he gave me an answer that was just classic. He talked about the "confidence of Wall Street" and the "confidence of the business community" and the "confidence of the foreign money markets."

And I was sitting there listening and thinking, "This is a Democratic secretary of the Treasury. This is who we elected. And I knew at that moment that we're going to get killed. It was all over. We'd thrown people out of work, and we expected them to vote for us. You've got to be crazy to expect that."

The incident led me to two conclusions. One was that the Democrats were going to lose, and probably deserved to lose. It also led me to believe that labor should play a more aggressive role in the Democratic Party. Because any guy who worked on a factory line across the country could tell you in 1980 that "we got half our guys out of work, and they ain't gonna vote Democratic."

You didn't need some Wall Street secretary of the Treasury to be making the critical decisions about the future of this country and the future of the Democratic Party. If you would have had a random assortment of Autoworkers, Steelworkers and Machinists, they would have told you that what Miller was saying was insane. Totally insane.

And that just kind of tells you where we are. Frankly, my view—and this reflects, obviously, my own institutional allegiances—is that I'd rather have a random assortment of 50 political activists from various unions making strategy for the Democrats. Those people would have a better sense of what the Democrats should do in the next election than the kinds of people who compose the

strategy groups that normally run Democratic campaigns.

In 1984 Gary Hart was able to paint labor as a "special interest." What sort of long-term damage has this done to the Democratic Party?

It's interesting that the Republicans have limited their attacks on that, because they're very nervous about playing that game.

When DLC types get up and criticize the Democrats for being the party of "labor, blacks and poor people," they give a credence to a claim that when the Republicans make, people say "bullshit." But the DLC types have reinforced those Republican attacks.

I mean, we were known as the "party of labor" in the '30s, and that was a period of bloodshed in labor disputes. And Democrats still won elections. It's when the Democrats shy away from representing working people that they lose elections. Our tie to working Americans is not our downside.

Mondale didn't lose in 1984 because of his association with labor. He had no message. He even attacked working people. He didn't lay a glove on the big corporations. He didn't say a damn thing about trade until he was forced to, when he mumbled a few minor things at the end.

Mondale ran a Galston campaign—they talked about the deficit. I mean, people don't believe the Democrats could balance a checkbook, let alone the national economy. And for Democrats to run on Republican issues in just fundamentally absurd.

Many Democrats felt betrayed when Michael Dukakis, then away from being identified as a "liberal," was there damage to the party?

I think he made a mistake by even engaging in the discussion. He should have put the thing back on partisan terms like Harry Truman did in 1948 and Hubert Humphrey did in the last three weeks of 1968. He should have made it a contest between "Democrats, who represent working people" and "Republicans, who represent the big corporations."

"Liberal" and "conservative" contain a

whole bunch of connotations. Up until recently there were three Democrats in this country for every two Republicans—although that's now narrowing a bit. But at the same time there were three Democrats for every two Republicans, there were three self-identified "conservatives" for every two self-identified "liberals." So it made sense for the Republicans to emphasize liberal vs. conservative. And any Democrat who bought into that rhetoric was an idiot.

The Democrats should talk strictly in terms of party and define party in terms that are strongest for us—who's for working people and who's for the big corporations.

But isn't the Democrats' real problem not that they listen to the wrong image-makers and pollsters, but that they listen only to image-makers and pollsters? Many Americans don't feel the party actually believes in much of anything.

I'm not sure that's it. I think part of it is that we've had second-rate pollsters and media people. The Republicans—the Richard Wirthlins and the Doug Baileys—they're just light-years ahead. They're just brighter than our guys. I don't want to get into personalities here, but they just happen to be smarter.

For example, in 1984 you can compare the Wirthlin team to Mondale's team. The Democrats had a 10 point lead in terms of party identification—40 percent to 45 percent of the American people say they are Democrats. And we got 40 percent of the vote. We didn't even get up to our party ID number. The Republicans, the party that represents 28 percent to 30 percent of the American people, got 60 percent of the vote. They actually doubled their party ID number.

That demonstrates beyond any shadow of a doubt their skill and our lack of skill. We're sitting there with this huge majority that Franklin Roosevelt has handed us, and basically we're pissing it away. The Republicans are sitting there with this terrible heritage of being the party of the Depression and the party of big business, and they're still beating us. It's amazing.

Second, you have the culture of the people who comprise the decision-making apparatus of the Democratic Party. They tend to be upper-middle class, and those that aren't have some business influence. That's why going after the yuppies and the liberal Republicans has so much appeal to this kind of decision-makers—because these are basically the kind of people they are.

I think there's also an element you raised earlier about who the Democrats are beholden to. One of my partners is a Democrat in the Maryland legislature. And he told me this story that I thought was very revealing. He got elected running the type of strong Democratic campaign we've been talking about. But he says that once you get there, you get all these businessmen coming up to you and saying, "You know, we're not so big on the Democrats, but you're special. You're a great guy."

Then you start getting all this political action committee (PAC) money—but not because you're a Democrat. You're getting this PAC money because you're an incumbent. The day that you're not an incumbent, you're going to be in the wilderness.

But all of a sudden you think that instead of getting 51 percent of the vote, you can go for 100 percent. The businessmen can love you just as much as Democrats can love you.

I think that's when we get into trouble—when our guys start believing that

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# EDITORIAL



David Klein, United Feature Syndicate

## Imperial mindset lives despite new moderation

The Reagan administration represented what might be the last serious attempt to reverse the anti-imperialist tide that has swept the world since the end of World War II. The former president did his best to bring back the glory days of empire—the time when an American president could overthrow a rebel government in Latin America with a show of the fleet or, in a pinch, a Marine battalion or two. Yet while Teddy Roosevelt exercised American power by speaking softly but carrying a big stick, Reagan was forced to do the reverse. He ranted and raved about Nicaragua and the Sandinistas, and he caused the Nicaraguan people untold misery by creating and loosing the contras on an otherwise peaceful people. He was unable to send in the Marines, however, or to overthrow the upstart government.

Now we have George Bush, who appears to be a transition from Reagan to reality. Unlike his predecessor, Bush is indecisive. He seems to understand that the old days of uninhibited domination are gone, but the old lordly mindset persists. Bush has given every indication that he recognizes the necessity—if the United States is not to isolate itself completely in Latin America—of not attempting an overthrow of Panama's dictator by force and violence. Instead he has pleaded for other Latin nations to help isolate Panama economically and diplomatically in the hope of driving Noriega out. Yet old ideas and ways of acting die hard. In a show of force he has sent 2,000 American troops on a militarily unnecessary journey to the Canal Zone, and his rhetoric has been imperious.

**Give and take:** Satirist Peter Finley Dunne once wrote that Andrew Carnegie, who had a habit of bestowing libraries on cities throughout the nation, had a peculiar kind of generosity. "He's generous," Dunne's character Mr. Dooley said of Carnegie. "Every time he gives a library, he gives himself away in a speech."

Something similar can be said of our president, who recently gave a speech to the Council on the Americas. The president of the United States—holder of the mightiest office on earth—started off saying how pleased he was to be "in such high-powered company once again—with David Rockefeller, the chairman of this illustrious council"—and other wealthy and powerful men. Then he launched into a scolding lecture about Nicaragua.

In his mind, Bush clearly continues to carry the white man's burden. He talks about Nicaragua as if it were one of his "little brown" grand-

children. Latin America and the Caribbean, he told this ruling-class gathering, are proving fertile ground for the ideas of "free government and free enterprise," but unlike the rest of Latin America, Nicaragua hasn't met his standard of freedom.

All in all, Bush sounded like an overbearing parent speaking about a juvenile delinquent. "Within Nicaragua," he said, "we want to see a promise kept—the promise of democracy, withheld by the Sandinista regime for more than a decade." And to encourage Nicaragua to fulfill this alleged promise, he said, the contras would be kept intact through February 1990, when elections are scheduled. Meanwhile, Bush will be watching to see if Sandinista behavior is satisfactory. Both the conduct and the outcome of those elections would be used to decide whether the Sandinistas can be left in peace. Presumably, even if the conduct passes muster, the outcome will be deemed unsatisfactory and the election will be declared another fraud if the Sandinistas win.

**Separate standards:** Part of the conduct that Bush thinks appropriate for Nicaragua is for there to be "outside observers given unfettered access to all election phases and all proceedings"—a suggestion that could never be made of a nation considered an equal. Imagine, for example, Japan or the Soviet Union demanding that their observers be given similar access to American elections.

Bush also complained about Nicaraguan restrictions on foreign campaign contributions. The Nicaraguan law—apparently passed with an eye on the desperate need for foreign exchange—allows foreign political contributions, but requires half of them to go to the government's Supreme Election Council. Bush wants unlimited freedom to finance the opposition campaigns and considers it unfair that this is denied. But would Bush want West Germany, not to mention the Soviet Union, to have a similar freedom to intervene in American elections? And Bush condemned Nicaragua for continuing the prohibition of private ownership of TV stations, even though this has been a common practice of democratic countries. Both Britain and France—to name only two countries—forbade private TV stations for many years.

**Protecting our interests:** All of these demands made on Nicaragua are seen by Bush as a test, which, "if the Sandinistas fail...will be a crisis waiting to happen." But if this is so, the crisis will have been created by the administration out of whole cloth, just as a series of similar crises were manufactured in the past. Bush may have forgotten the past, but Central Americans remember that the United States sent troops into Nicaragua seven times between 1894 and 1933, that Marines were stationed there almost continuously from 1912 until 1933, and that, according to an official State Department document, "their work included activity against the outlaw leader Sandino in 1928." All of this was done "to protect American interests," which means American companies doing business there. To those "interests," Sandino was indeed a bandit—much like Pancho Villa in Mexico. But to the Nicaraguans, who named their revolution after him, Sandino was a democrat and a national hero.

In the good old days that the Reagan crowd longed for, what we now call the Third World was seen by our rulers simply as a series of investment opportunities. When our "little brown brothers" worked hard and didn't complain too much, business was good and all went well. But when they tried to control their own destiny, they were hunted down and slaughtered. Bush recognizes that those days are gone, but the habit of thinking about Latin American nations as subject to our will and duty-bound to accommodate themselves to the needs of our business class dies hard—and not only among conservatives.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, Republican and Democratic leaders have been able to mask this way of looking at the world with rhetoric about the threat to national security posed by Soviet clients in "our" hemisphere. Now that that threat is no longer credible, Bush relies on his self-appointed role as protector of "free government and free enterprise" where he chooses to find it endangered. Given his background and the interests he represents, this is not likely to change. But it is entirely possible for the public to force a change in the attitude of Democrats in and out of Congress. This nation was founded on opposition to foreign domination and control. That stance is part of what's best in the American tradition. It's time to start applying it to ourselves.

### Summertime, and the reading is easy

*In These Times* begins its summer schedule with this issue. We publish every other week until late August.

## IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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# LETTERS

## Environmental pro-choice

AS AN ENVIRONMENTALIST, I STRONGLY OBJECT to the terms used by the so-called pro-lifers in characterizing the abortion debate. Their mythology is that "life" begins at conception, but any competent biologist can testify that life began more than 3 billion years ago in prehistoric oceans, and that it is now sustained by the entire global ecosystem—not merely by pairs of humans having licit or illicit sex.

No offense to the pope, but life does not only inhere in fetuses, embryos, fertilized zygotes and individual sperm or egg cells. It does not miraculously spring into existence during the first, third, or 20th week of pregnancy. Life is a miracle that is characteristic of—and supported by—this entire planet. And currently, the planet is in danger.

Right-wing Catholics, fundamentalist Protestants and Shi'ite Moslems seem incapable of grasping the fact, but being "pro-life" today must mean preserving tropical rain forests, defending the ozone layer and the lowly earthworm and working for ecological stability. And it is increasingly obvious that, for such stability to be preserved, the Earth's rapidly expanding human population must soon be brought under control.

The religious extremists in the "pro-life" movement, with their grand metaphysical ideas that are strangely obsessed with the sex organs and the womb, are systematically working to make the rest of us forget this. Out of a truly sick obsession with sexual purity, they apparently want to ban all sexual behavior that doesn't result in reproduction—today, by banning abortion; tomorrow, by attacking gay men and lesbians for the awful crime of not contributing to the population explosion; and next week, by again taking after condom use and the pill.

From an ecological perspective, these people are insane. They have lost sight of the health of the planet, and they are unwittingly trying to force humanity to breed itself into ecological Armageddon. They are thus "pro-death" rather than "pro-life." If they want to abandon the left over the abortion issue, we should show them the door.

More problematic are thoughtful religious people who do care about social justice and ecology, but feel real moral qualms about abortion. They are stumbling over an uncomfortable truth that haunts everyone who tries to take biology seriously while still holding to Judeo/Christian/humanist ethics.

As the symbolism of the Last Supper suggests, death and life are intertwined in nature. For non-human life to survive on this planet, and even for our own grandchildren to enjoy adequate food supplies, it is not only necessary that Jesus should die for our sins—it is also essential that everyone now living should (eventually) die for the ecosystem. It is also a simple fact that human beings can survive only by killing other living beings—if not other mammals, then at least the corn, wheat and rice that we depend on for grain, as well as insects that take these crops from us for their own use.

Because of the intimate links between life and death, our choices as to what is "moral"

are partly arbitrary. Of course, this raises havoc with some of the most progressive tenets of Christianity. We rightly fear the consequences if certain races, religious groups or age groups can arbitrarily be denied human status in the name of some "higher" purpose. But if we arbitrarily insist on a definition of human life, and policies based on it, that are not ecologically sound—if we defend the fetus only to accelerate the population explosion—we risk destroying the ecosystem that God or Nature has left here to sustain us. And that, in a real sense, is evil.

How can we affirm our cultural values about the sanctity of human life while still protecting the planet? One way is to define the fetus as less than a person—since it has yet to draw breath or participate in the culture that everywhere marks humanity's presence in the world—and by then allowing abortion of this "non-person" on demand.

Andy Feeney  
Washington, D.C.

## One-sided

AS A NEW SUBSCRIBER, I WAS VERY FAVORABLY IMPRESSED with the full story by James Petras concerning the Chilean grape brouhaha (*JTT*, April 12). And in "Alaska aftermath," by Terry Carr (*JTT*, May 3), you have done another service to thinking people. Many thanks.

I am a WASP with over 55 years experience in the maritime field—40 years holding an unlimited U.S. Coast Guard license as master (captain). In these years I have eyeballed 33 African countries and lived in 19 of them for periods of from one week to 12 years.

So I cannot let pass without comment the letter (*JTT*, May 3) by Frieda Werden regarding Ali Mazrui's TV production *The Africans*. I watched a few portions before becoming so disgusted with Ali's skewed portrayal of Africa that I had to stop.

He did "vividly show the ravages of capitalism in Africa," but Ali fails even to mention the other side of the coin—best exemplified, in my estimation, in Ivory Coast and Senegal (both before and after the end of colonial rule), and worst, of course, in the Union of South Africa!

In Liberia, during the long presidency of W.V.S. Tubman, there existed a near-model democratic government. Tubman gave Liberian women the right to vote (the first African state). Sadly, both before and, apparently, after Tubman, the story is far different.

I was so upset that Ali failed to develop what could have been a brilliant educational series on Africa. A true reporter must be unbiased. My credo is: (a) belief in God

as creator of all; (b) belief in the "brotherhood of all mankind"; (c) living by the "Golden Rule"—Luke 6:31—and (d) the practice of total ethical honesty, integrity and compassion. These four are all the world needs.

Capt. Johnston R. Hilford  
Seabrook, Texas

## Abortion

IN THE APRIL 9 PRO-CHOICE MARCH IN WASHINGTON, D.C., there were quite a few people who are against abortion for themselves but would never dream of forcing their views on others.

Before abortions were legal in the Kings County Hospital, for every woman there for a delivery there were two for repair after botched, non-professional abortions. After abortions became legal, our maternity death rate dropped dramatically, since women were no longer dying from abortions.

At a clinic, a waiting father said, "I'm a Roman Catholic. Yesterday I was against abortion; tomorrow I will be against abortion. But today, with three children in junior and senior high schools, we can't possibly forego my wife's earnings by having another child."

Kaje Oser  
Clinton, N.Y.

## Citizen vs. person

MAY I POINT OUT AN ERROR IN REASONING IN ERIC Rosenbloom's otherwise substantial defense of a woman's right to abortion.

He correctly points out that the 14th Amendment recognizes as citizens "only those persons born or naturalized in the U.S." From this he erroneously concludes that a fetus is a non-person.

The factor of non-personhood may still be responsibly debated, but all that the 14th Amendment can do is classify the fetus as a non-citizen.

Steve Allen  
Van Nuys, Calif.

**Editor's note:** Rosenbloom was arguing that a fetus is not a person as defined in the Constitution and is not protected by law. Steve Allen is certainly correct that the personhood of a fetus can be philosophically debated.

## Solution

WHEN I WAS A GRADUATE STUDENT AT TEMPLE University I studied under the renowned political scientist Peter Bachrach, who taught us about the power to keep things off the agenda of discussion as a method of elite control. I am reminded of that important lesson by the recent debates over what to do about the drug crisis. Neoconservatives such as William Bennett are proposing a massive police crackdown in Wash-

ington, D.C., to deal with that city's alarming murder rate. Generally, conservatives see such a problem as one of sin and blame the liberals of the '60s for our lapse in moral standards. In their zeal to restore American morality they are willing to weaken constitutional protections and perhaps impose a police state.

The liberals, on the other hand, are talking about treating substance abuse as a disease, and some are proposing the legalization of drugs, so addicts can get help from doctors and so that organized crime will be deprived of its monopoly on drugs. While I think this approach has merit, what I rarely hear from either conservatives or liberals is what the economic and social conditions are that make people want to take and sell drugs. Kept off the agenda for discussion, it seems, are the root causes of drug abuse and other social ills, namely poverty and exploitation. If people had decent incomes and lives, they would not need to escape by using and selling drugs.

But to talk about abolishing poverty and exploitation is to talk about socialism, which neither Democrats, by and large, nor Republicans are willing to advocate. Even Jesse Jackson, the most liberal of the major Democratic Party leaders, is not going to advocate that we take the means of production, distribution and exchange away from the capitalists and give it over to the workers—which is what it will take to abolish poverty and exploitation.

If we want to put abolishing poverty by social ownership on the agenda as a solution to crime, drug abuse and other social ills, we cannot rely on the Democrats or the Republicans to do so for us. Only we can do that with an independent political party, be it socialist, labor or green.

Donald F. Busky  
Philadelphia

## Correction

The end of Pat Aufderheide's May 17 review of *84 Charlie MoPic* was dropped. After noting that the viewer comes away with a respect for soldiers in Vietnam, and a contempt for corrupt officers, the original review continued:

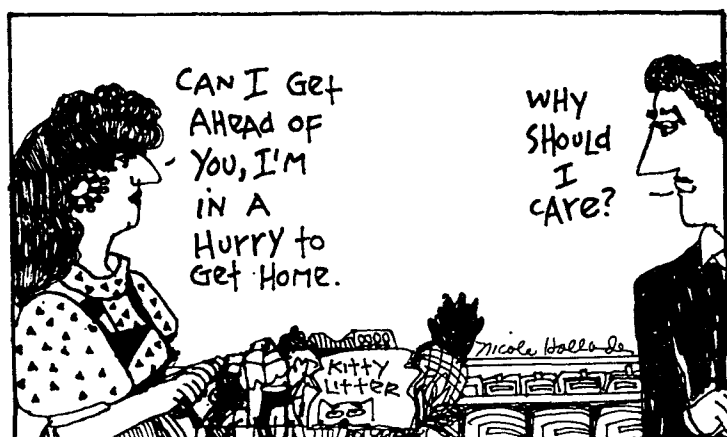
"You may or may not be led to ask larger questions about this war in one of the tropics where the American government claims a national interest.

"But you won't get any answers to questions like that from the field."

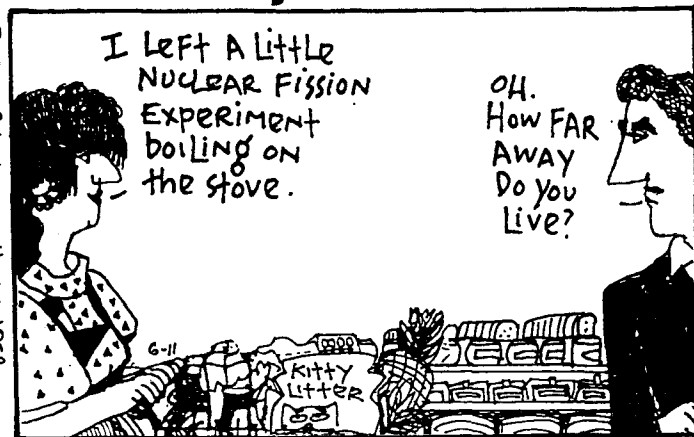
## Correction

The story on degradable plastics in the May 17 edition of *In These Times* should have been credited to David Morris.

## SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander





By Rep. Ted Weiss

**E**CONOMIC CONVERSION" IS AN ISSUE that's on the minds of more and more policy-makers these days. The U.S. economy is currently dependent on a largely unproductive, increasingly unnecessary and cost-maximizing military industry. And innovative attempts to reform—to "convert"—this military-based economy are suddenly finding open ears around Washington.

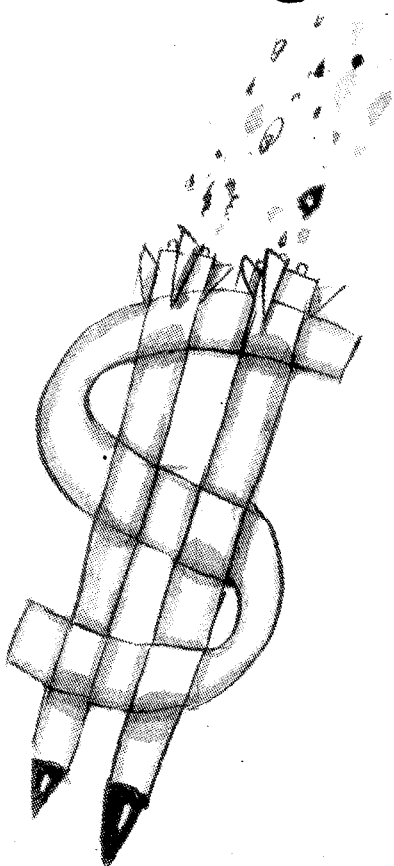
Should the U.S. fail to make substantial cuts in military spending, our country runs the risk over the long run of moving from its already second-rate status to that of a third-rate economy. Yet ironically, if we do make the cuts the immediate effect will be a loss of jobs and capital depletion in the localities in which military-servicing industries are located. The question, then, is how do we reconcile the need to move away from our dependence on a military economy while guaranteeing the stability of jobs in industries that get cut back in the process?

Our current defense posture forces us to maintain a capacity for military overkill incompatible with the other needs of our society. In the recent climate of detente and with our bulging deficit, the question no longer is, "Will we cut from the defense budget?" but rather "How much will we cut?" The issue involves not only our paramount need to co-exist peacefully with the Soviet Union, but our own economic viability.

Between 1947 and 1987 our military spending totaled \$7.62 trillion. As Seymour Melman, professor emeritus of industrial engineering at Columbia University, has pointed out, by 1982 this amount exceeded the money value of the nation's civilian industrial plant, equipment and infrastructure. During that same time, Japan and West Germany experienced impressive growth, producing capital and consumer goods at affordable prices while maintaining high wages, a rising standard of living and repairs to their infrastructure: signs of a first-class industrial economy.

In *These Times*' April 26 editorial on the waning of the Cold War, as measured in polls by the non-partisan Roosevelt Center for American Policy Studies, is a good place from which to begin a discussion of conversion from military to civilian production.

## How to cure the economy of Pentagon-induced gout



c 1989 Peter Hannan

The results of the Roosevelt study speak directly to the basis for economic conversion: our improving relationship with the Soviets and the renewed possibility for substantive arms control agreements and the pressing need to service our increasingly deteriorating infrastructure and environment. The general public, as the poll showed, perceives this historic opportunity to reorient our priorities away from an entrenched and often inefficient military-industrial complex in favor of jobs, peace and internal improvements in our economy.

But that reorientation will not be easy. In mid-December, for example, the Grumman Corporation announced its intention to lay off several thousand workers at its plant on Long Island. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney recently declared his intent to cancel the F-14 fighter jet, one of the Long Island facility's principal projects, placing thousands of other jobs across the country in limbo.

In past weeks Congress voted to approve the closing of 90 military bases that a bipartisan commission has determined to be outmoded or obsolete. When this happens,

thousands of military and civilian employees will be displaced.

If a START treaty is signed and ratified, reducing by 50 percent the strategic nuclear arsenals of the superpowers, many ongoing military projects will be reduced.

Unfortunately, the U.S. is economically unprepared to deal with the reality of a no-growth defense budget and the new opportunities for arms reductions. We need a means to limit the economic dislocation resulting from the inevitable base closings and defense contract cancellations. Economic conversion is that policy.

**What conversion entails:** A genuine economic conversion policy would require every firm with military contracts employing more than 100 persons to formulate an economic and technical procedure to assure an orderly transformation of resources from military-oriented purposes to alternative civilian uses in case a contract is cancelled or significantly reduced or a military facility is closed. Federal funds would be available for income support and worker retraining while firms implement their conversion plans.

Such a policy would enhance our economic security, broaden our industrial base and encourage a more balanced and rational process of developing military strategy and pursuing arms reduction.

The operation of a large military economy for more than 40 years has led to major

### There are productive alternatives to our wasteful dependence on military spending.

underinvestment in the facilities and services that make up our nation's infrastructure. These include roads, education facilities, libraries, public health operations and parks. We only need look around us to see the deterioration caused by our overemphasis on the military economy.

The current relationship between defense contractors and the federal government undermines our international competitiveness, erodes our industrial base and endangers our economic security by adding billions of dollars to the federal budget deficit. Defense firms depend on large federal subsidies to ensure their profit levels.

Thus, while the focus of firms in a free-enterprise system ought to be on making cheaper and better products, the military-dependent firm concentrates on producing increasingly complex hardware that will satisfy the needs of a particular defense project, regardless of cost.

Worse still, there is actually an incentive for these companies to charge as much as they can get from the government. In its most cynical form this type of cost-plus entreprenuring produced the famous \$500 hammers that received so much attention a few years ago. Additionally, these firms

often manufacture products essentially useless to the civilian population and uncompetitive in international markets.

But many communities are dependent on the employment generated by defense-serving firms. As history has repeatedly shown, political and community leaders often band together to resist the cancellation of unnecessary weapons systems or the closing of obsolete bases. The Defense Department uses the prospect of job loss to pressure elected officials into supporting wasteful military spending. As a result, many of our defense decisions reflect political consideration of losing jobs rather than a weapon system's contribution to national security. Grumman will undoubtedly soon be lobbying on just such grounds.

A policy of economic conversion would allow defense policy-makers to consider which weapons are truly necessary for the national defense, taking away a barrier to the elimination of unnecessary and outmoded defense projects.

**Opportunity knocks:** Rather than being the economic risk that some have suggested, the conversion plan is actually an economic opportunity. By applying more of our technical and scientific resources to the civilian economy, we would be better able to address the problems facing many of our nation's troubled industries. A greater reliance on civilian production, combined with more vigorous vocational education, could also help train many underemployed and unemployable individuals whose needs are currently unmet.

Furthermore, there is compelling evidence that military spending creates significantly fewer jobs than comparable spending in the civilian sphere. Our economic reliance on the military results in a severe "brain drain" of our most advanced technical workers away from civilian fields.

Currently, 75 percent of all federal research and development funds are used in the military budget. A large percentage of all scientists and engineers are devoted to military-related work. In practical terms, this means that many of our trained scientists and engineers are working to devise more complex and destructive military equipment while U.S. productivity is lagging in important areas such as medical research and computer technology.

As we move into a period of detente in superpower relations and as we begin to rebuild our economic foundation, an economic conversion policy has become a virtual necessity. Legislation I have introduced in Congress, the Defense Economic Adjustment Act (HR 101), provides for planning costs, establishes local conversion committees and funds worker retraining programs to help strengthen our economic base and allow for a more rational arms reduction policy.

Hearings on this bill are scheduled to begin in June, so this is a key time for those interested in economic conversion legislation to make their voices heard. The bill is one of many proposals before Congress that progressives can coalesce around. This policy will help lead to both a more competitive high-employment economy and a safer world for us all.

**Rep. Ted Weiss**, a Democrat, represents New York's 17th Congressional District on Manhattan's West Side.

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## Black political power

The scandal that now threatens to engulf Mayor Tom Bradley or leave him neutralized in office is but the latest in the onslaught on black politicians around the country. Each drama—whether it be that of Bradley or of Mayor Marion Barry in Washington, D.C.—has its own specific lineaments, but the sum total spells as crushing a blow to black political power as that rendered in the 19th century by the end of Reconstruction, with similar charges about the venality of black politicians.

The story at one level can be traced back to Republican strategy proposed by the conservative think tank the Heritage Foundation at the very start of the Reagan administration. A report from the foundation urged a Republican strategy of denying funds traditionally going to inner-city Democrats. The consequence, Heritage argued, would be a cannibalizing war between these inner-city politicians and the Democrats of the suburbs, with ensuing political advantage to the Republican Party.

The Reagan administration was swift to take Heritage's advice. Cuts in inner-city funding followed, of which perhaps the best-known example was the ending of CETA money. The press performed its usual supportive role by piously adopting neoliberal critiques of the utility of "throwing money at problems," and by rooting out fraud and abuse in the application by locals of the money received from Washington. Of course, CETA money was a major source of patronage power for Democrats. Its disappearance powerfully contributed to the political strains that resulted in the Jackson candidacies in 1984 and 1988.

Hand in hand with this assault on a major source of Democratic power, Republican prosecutors, task forces and kindred equestrian enforcers began the series of sting operations, undercover investigations, probes, etc., aimed at discommoding Democratic politicians—particularly those lodged in the vulnerable interstices of urban political culture.

Former U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani in New York is the classic paradigm of this line of assault, parlayed by this latter-day Dewey—the famous Republican prosecutor of an earlier era—into a serious bid for the mayoralty of New York. At the other end of the country, the reputed principal target of the FBI's sting operation in Sacramento was state Assembly Speaker Willie Brown. Brown was smart enough to evade implication.

The third stage is now well under way, with the "war on drugs" now seeing inner cities put under virtual trusteeship, as prosecutors charge in under the flag of RICO and the national drug emergency. There's a certain horrible symmetry to the process. The political economy of Reaganism destroyed the last remnants of urban reform and left the inner cities devastated and despairing, primed for the scourges of crack culture, which in turn sponsored the ensuing invasion of federal prosecutors and kindred enforcers.

**A job well done:** The authors of that original Heritage strategy have every reason to be well satisfied, grateful to the model that impelled them, namely Margaret Thatcher's determined campaign to destroy the financial, legal and sociological sources of the Labor Party's power in the inner cities of the United Kingdom.

Consider now the prospect for black

## ASHES & DIAMONDS

By Alexander Cockburn



Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley is the latest black official under attack.

political representation in California. It looks dire. With Latino demands in Los Angeles for more equitable political representation, blacks stand to lose at least one and probably two council seats. The eastern half of South-Central Los Angeles is fast approaching a majority of Latinos.

Up north, the city of Oakland has hitherto had a black majority and has been run by blacks. But in 20 years Oakland will be an Asian city. In other words, just as blacks are being destroyed economically, they are losing political power.

Mayor Bradley's travails are richly symbolic of what has happened to Los Angeles during his long sojourn in City Hall. Throughout his reign he has moved further and further from his base, a black liberal coalition. Not only has he become increasingly dependent upon real estate developers, but particularly on foreign ones. In his 1986 gubernatorial race against George Deukmejian he got \$200,000 in contributions from Shuwa Corp. and from Mitsui Fudosan, both emblems of Japanese realty. Bradley responded to this largesse by lobbying vigorously on their behalf, subsidizing at vast public expense the internationalization of the economy of Los Angeles. Examples: the ongoing operation of the Community Redevelopment Agency in subsidizing land assemblage and infrastructure for Japanese investors downtown and the

setting of landing fees for jumbo jets coming into LAX at about \$400 per plane. In London's Heathrow the equivalent fees run to \$10,000 per jumbo. Bradley has been one of the nation's foremost advocates and lobbyists for free trade. Under the mayor's long regime, Los Angeles has burgeoned as a

**Reagan's political economy destroyed the last remnants of urban reform and left the inner cities devastated and despairing, primed for the scourges of crack culture, which in turn sponsored the ensuing invasion of federal prosecutors.**

Third World export platform in its own right—130,000 garment workers, 90,000 furniture workers on minimum wage—holding a manufacturing work force equivalent to that of many Third World nations. Like these nations, Bradley has been commensurately hospitable to international business, refusing—where it has been in his power—

to tax it at all.

**All the mayor's men:** Bradley has differed somewhat from many of his colleagues across the country in not being dependent on black voters for his power, and not being confined by a role of being merely the administrator of scarce resources in hard times, doling out austerity to South-Central. His support overlaps not only with that for the Westside liberals, Reps. Howard Berman and Henry Waxman, but also with that for Gov. Deukmejian.

A big enthusiast for Bradley, for example, is Dick Riordan, realtor, LBO operator, lawyer. Riordan is also a lawyer for the Catholic Archdiocese and was a major funder of the organizing effort that evicted Rose Bird from the state Supreme Court. Another Bradley enthusiast has been Alexander Hagan, the biggest shopping mall developer in California and a major supporter of Republicans on the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors. But even Bradley is now caught up in the collapse of black political representation, under siege for receiving money from enterprises to which he subsequently steered city business. Speaker Willie Brown is under continuing pressure of charges of venality.

The final grotesque irony is the association of Bradley—and indeed of Jesse Jackson, as last week's *L.A. Weekly* disclosed—with the maestro of junk bonds and the leveraged buyout, Michael Milken, now under indictment by the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Indeed, Bradley has been allied to two of the forces most disastrous to reasonable livelihoods in the region. First, Asian real estate capital, whose expansion is now threatening Temple Beaudry, part of the largest Central American community in the U.S. The city did nothing as the automobile, steel and rubber industries collapsed in the metropolitan area, taking with them the industrial jobs crucial to any kind of mobility in South-Central or East L.A.

Second, along with real estate capital, Bradley dwelled—like many other California politicians—in the nourishing aura of Milken's favors. The corporate predators symbolized by Milken and his erstwhile Drexel Burnham junk bond operation have destroyed jobs by the thousand, the classic California example being the late-'70s buyout of Kaiser Steel, in which the LBO operators took a company with \$5 billion in ready cash, and in just two years sent it into Chapter 11 bankruptcy, wiping out medical coverage and pension supplements for 8,000 steelworkers. Let Jesse Jackson go talk to those workers about the therapeutic properties of junk bond capital.

The final image of this devastation is of Nancy Reagan conversing amicably with L.A. Police Chief Darryl Gates, seated in a commodious trailer, while the drug SWAT squads kicked in the ruins left by her husband's policies, and while the president's colleagues in government sit in the glittering palaces of their sunset years.

Footnote: On April 18 the Congressional Black Caucus released its comprehensive Alternative Budget for the fiscal year of 1990 to challenge the nation's crisis in housing, drugs, education, health and employment stability. Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-CA), the chairman of the Black Caucus, presented the CBC budget as "the People's Alternative." The press conference to launch this budget was ignored by almost all mainstream corporate media, including the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

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By Nelson Smith

## The beauty part: at least skin deep

**W**HAT IS BEAUTY? AT NEW York's Jacob Javits Center recently, the answer to that timeless question seemed imminent. Acres of booths, gadgets and specialists sprawled to the far horizons of the exhibit hall in the 72nd International Beauty Show, the U.S. salon industry's largest annual event. This year's theme: "Beauty Compleat."

"What is beauty?" I asked a woman standing at the first exhibit, a virtual mini-mall for Phibbs Salon Industries. To her right was a step-up platform with a slightly unnerving display of dentist-style chairs complete with fully accoutered instrument trays. Two dermatologists in smocks sat by, eying the skin of the passing crowd.

To her left, under whirling lights and disco music, a slim young man thrust and parried with a comb at a model in a rotating chair. As he worked, an announcer prowled the forestage with a microphone. "Mr. Dino on stage, ladies and gentlemen! Let's hear it for Mr. Dino! See how he's using that spritz? He works it up with his comb. That's it! You want hair to go crazy? Get out the spritz!"

Out in the audience, meanwhile, hair had already gone crazy. It rose from about 50 mostly young and female spectators in teased, clipped and sculpted forms like rows of palace shrubs. All heads inclined studiously toward the stage.

"Beauty? Mmmm...I don't know. I'm not sure," said my lead-off interview. She shrugged and turned away as a round of applause went up for Mr. Dino.

**Babes in Tweezerland:** Answers were similarly circumspect at the nearby Pivot Point booth, featuring mannequin heads overtaken by swarms of rubbery green curlers. "I don't know. Beauty can be anything, I guess," said a hostess. "Beauty is something that makes you feel good," said her



counterpart next door at Tweezerland. Both answers followed long, suspicious pauses. Looking at the vast maze of booths ahead, I decided I would have to move on a little faster, trusting my instinct for the philosophical type.

I spotted a likely one working the booth at Ruth Regina Hair Creations, a bearded man in glasses. Behind him was a red pegboard wall hung with curly blonde scalps. "Beauty? I'll tell you what beauty is." He pulled me away from the women attendants at the display. "Beauty is liking what you see when you wake up next to it," he growled man-to-man. "But if you really want to see beauty, let me show you something." He shook out a loop of synthetic ringlets on an elastic

band. "This is our own patent. No other company has it." He peered at my press badge. "We've been in *Vogue*, *Beauty Digest*, everywhere. Ruth Regina did the Beatles, you know."

"Did what?"

"Did the Beatles when they first came to America. Hair, everything." He reached behind the booth and hauled out an ancient black and white photograph of the Beatles.

Further down the aisle, past gleaming follicle extruders and piles of shrink-wrapped hair, I thought I spotted an insightful glint in the eye of Thelma Little (by her nametag), an ample, self-assured looking woman representing World Hair Goods ("100% Human"). I put the question to her and pulled out

my pen. "Beauty is women," she said softly. Could I argue with that one?

But beauty became less and less womanly and more and more biotechnological as I pressed on toward the center of the hall. On all sides, models under various apparatuses seemed to be undergoing the final stages of taxidermy. Computers were everywhere. Volunteers sat upright in folding chairs like people posing for sidewalk por-

### IMAGE

traits, while the stylists of the future warped and wobbled their faces on computer screens.

At one display a man swung back and forth between the computer controls and a model, applying a twist of the dial here, a dab of makeup there. His subject seemed to have accumulated every process in the exhibit hall. Her nails were glittery blue. Her hair was piled up in a moussed haystack. Her face lay beneath deep layers of flesh-tone foundation in which two pairs of thickly mascaraed eyelashes wriggled like trapped spiders. A group of teenage girls stood gazing at her. "What is beauty?" I asked one of them. "You're lookin' at it," she said.

**Bulging bottom line:** But beauty isn't just in the eyes of teenage beholders. In 1988 it filled the cash re-

**Beauty became less and less womanly and more and more biotechnological as I pressed on toward the center of the hall.**

gisters of the salon industry with around \$20 billion. According to convention press releases, America's salons and suppliers snipped and crimped about \$12 billion worth of hair, sloshed some \$9 billion worth of chemicals on it, sawed off nearly \$2 billion worth of fingernails and did one miraculous thing after another to about \$500 million worth of skin.

The industry has had a healthy growth rate of about 9 percent per year, spurred onward, cried the press release, by "eight splendid years of haught coiffure in the White House." (I swear I didn't make that up.) Naturally, such profitability lends the business a certain amount of authority.

"Beauty is a science," said a woman in glasses at the "Aromatology" counter. That seemed accurate. The science could be seen at its frontiers just across the aisle at Germaine De Capuccini, anti-aging

specialists from Miami. Rows of instruments gleamed. Tubes from a vaporizer smoked and bubbled. A man in a white lab coat who had been bending over a prone figure in a reclining chair suddenly stood aside, and the woman, draped in a white sheet, sat slowly upright like the cadaver in a horror movie. One of the salesmen waved his hand toward the experiment. "Beauty comes from within," he said.

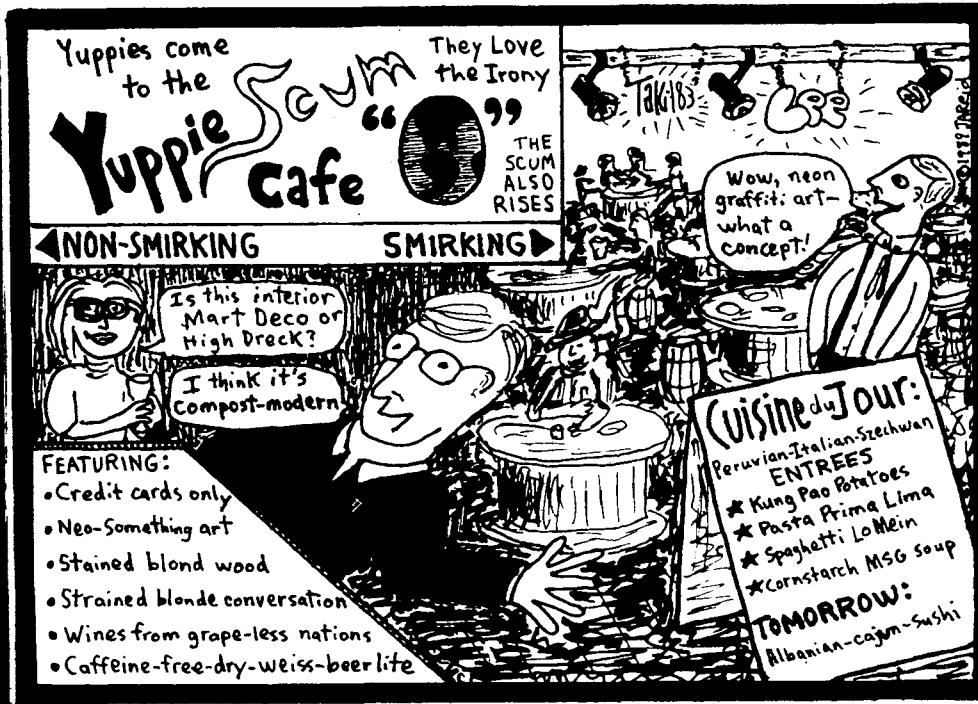
And indeed, despite the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, consensus seemed to point to beauty's interiority. "I say it's on the inside," said a woman at a small display of non-surgical facelifts and tan-thru swimsuits. "Inner confidence and motivation," said a woman stirring a pot of steaming green goop on a counter stacked with white gauze masks. "Naturalness!" said a manicurist at United Nails, who had just won her 17th first-place trophy for natural-looking design. "Show him!" she called to a model. The model approached me from the left and waggled 10 slender digits ending in long, rectangular red nails. They clattered lightly in the air like wind chimes.

But the very proportions of my question seemed to grow as I pushed on. Sometimes the answer was specific. "Beauty is long, bushy red hair," said a young girl with short, thin, darkish hair. Other times the answer was suddenly transcendental. "Beauty is everything," said a tired-looking woman with a full bag of samples and merchandise. And that seemed to be the only real answer.

Beauty is everything! Beauty is mudpacks and U-prongs, lip gels and box-jointed cuticle nippers. Beauty is tanning machines and carpeted platforms sagging under prancing models. Beauty is vegetable juicers and hair extenders from London. Beauty is #12 texturizers and 30-day guarantees. Beauty comes in airplanes and free shuttle buses. It comes from Orlando, Chicago, Ft. Worth and Greenville. It comes from all over the globe, or at the very least with the global spirit of Commisso Internazionale, Inc., Brooklyn. (In fact, Brooklyn—by its representation in booths and attendees—seems to be beauty's fertile crescent.)

Yes, I admitted, beauty is everywhere and everything. And of course, beauty is eternal. It never ends. It goes on and on, aisle after aisle, through moist throngs and irrepressible vendors. I looked down and saw some sort of flat, sticky applicator stuck to my shoe. I smiled wearily. That, too, is beauty, I thought. It's all beauty. I looked up and saw a not-so-thin woman in a bikini turning on a pedestal under bright lights as two assistants slowly mummified her in skins of clear Saran Wrap. I hesitated.

**Nelson Smith** is a writer living in New York.





By Patricia Thomson

## Director Stanley Kwan choreographs the always tricky three-China shuffle

**T**HE BUSTLING HONG KONG FILM industry produces about as many action films, comedies and kung fu kick-flicks per year as the output of the major Hollywood studios combined. In virtually none of this highly commercial fare does the political dynamic between Hong Kong, the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan take center stage in the narrative. Off screen, however, the tensions and alliances are a matter of course, affecting how film studios, financiers and directors work.

If a Hong Kong studio gets financing from the Bank of China, for instance, the studio is considered affiliated with the PRC, and its films will not get into Taiwan. It's one or the other, and it's hard to cross over. When Hong Kong director Ann Hui wanted to shoot on location in Taiwan after having previously shot two films in the PRC, she first had to formally apologize to the Taiwanese government.

There are signs that this situation is easing up, particularly since President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan replaced Chiang Kai-shek's son in office last year and has pressed for more open trade and cultural exchange programs. One such indication is a new film now in postproduction by Hong Kong director Stanley Kwan. *Full Moon in New York* is the first Chinese film to involve people from all three Chinas.

The three leading actresses are well-known stars from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China who play middle-class immigrants from their respective regions who meet while living in New York City. Kwan also used scriptwriters from both Taiwan and the PRC. Moreover, *Full Moon in New York* will get distribution in the three Chinas when it is released this summer.

**Ghost of a chance:** At age 33 and with three feature films under his belt, Kwan has earned a reputation as a maverick director who has been able to maintain a high degree of integrity and originality while working within the heart of Hong Kong's bottom-line, genre-oriented film industry (where the word "independent" indicates size, not vision, and suggests small companies turning out one kung fu film a year, rather than dozens).

Kwan is still relatively unknown in the U.S., since no sizable distributor has picked up his work, even though *Rouge* (1987), his innovative foray into the classic ghost film genre, has been the unofficial hit of one film festival after another. With *Rouge* sweeping up seven Hong Kong Academy Awards in early April, chances are better that the studio bosses might try to tap the U.S. theatrical market a bit more earnestly. But, as Kwan is the first to admit, their support has not been unwavering. Even *Rouge* al-

most didn't make it off the shelf.

*Rouge* is the story of Fleur, a high-class courtesan in 1930s Hong Kong, and a wealthy client who fall in love. When their plans for marriage are thwarted by his family, they enter into a joint suicide pact, but he loses courage and survives. Fifty years later—or one day, in the spiritual realm—Fleur returns to look for her lover. Taking out a

### FILM

classified ad, she meets a young journalist who, along with his live-in girlfriend, helps search for Fleur's lost love.

The story unfolds largely in flashback, and as the film moves fluently between Hong Kong in the '30s and '80s, it contrasts the rich, lacquered, traditionbound atmosphere of the brothel and the painfully constricted passions with today's cool fluorescent world and casual relationships. *Rouge* contains no flying ghosts, no ghoulish makeup (Fleur wears only a bit of rouge to pass as human). The only special effects are tongue-in-cheek, with one scene occurring on a film studio lot where a director coaches a "ghost" suspended on wires to put a little more spirit into his swordplay.

The studio wanted special effects in the ghost film, but Kwan refused to budge. With the entry deadline for Taiwan's film industry awards upon them, the Golden Harvest studio glumly submitted *Rouge* as is. It was nominated for six Golden Horse awards, won three, and subsequently went on to become a box office hit in the Chinese markets and a critical success in the West.

**They'll take Manhattan:** In early April, Kwan wrapped up a five-month stay in New York City with a rough-cut screening of *Full Moon in New York* for friends and crew. *Full Moon* is the flip side of such Asian-American films as Peter Wang's *A Great Wall* or Lisa Hsia's *Made in*

### Maverick director Kwan has maintained artistic integrity in Hong Kong's genre-oriented film biz.

*China*, in which U.S. directors travel to China to explore their cultural roots.

With *Full Moon*, a Hong Kongese director sets three Chinese characters with different cultural back-



Anita Mui as the courtesan Fleur in Stanley Kwan's *Rouge*.

grounds in the States to examine their common links and divergences. There's a mainland Chinese woman newly wed to an Asian American, a recent émigré real estate entrepreneur from Hong Kong who is working part time in her relatives' Chinatown restaurant, and an actress who rejected her Taiwanese heritage upon moving to New York 12 years ago and is now in the midst of an identity crisis. While *Full Moon* focuses on their differences in handling situations and people, "the conclusion," Kwan says, "is that no matter where you're from, you are still a Chinese and you face the same problems in a foreign country."

*Full Moon*'s questions of cultural identity and immigrant status are on the minds of thousands of Hong Kongese who are deciding whether

to leave their homeland before the British colony is reunited with mainland China in 1997. But anxieties surrounding the deadline are not overtly addressed in Hong Kong films for both political and commercial reasons. Film censorship policies prohibit works that might be "prejudicial to good relations with other territories"—meaning China. In turn, financiers won't back films dealing with 1997, because they don't believe they'd have an audience, holding fast to the "escapist entertainment" definition of cinema. Nonetheless, certain directors have worked the question of 1997 into their films through allegory, historical parallels or indirect allusions.

Kwan is currently planning a film that will reflect the kind of political suppression within the film indus-

try that he, for one, anticipates will occur with reunification. *Ruan Lingyu* will be about a famous silent movie actress by that name who grew into a kind of folk hero during the turbulent '30s. Her story will be seen from the perspective of a modern-day actress studying to play Lingyu's part in a biographical movie.

**Social realities:** After spending the early part of her career in schlock commercial and martial arts films, Lingyu started working with some young, innovative directors who wanted to make films that addressed social realities. Lingyu thus began her sympathetic portrayals of servants, dance hall girls and prostitutes—characters previously invisible in Chinese film. Her popularity soared among women and left-wing intellectuals. "Finally, the right wing used her affair with two men to attack her," says Kwan. "She was singled out, because there was a lot of politics put into her movies. Passions were there. So they tried to suppress the strength of the left-wing moviemakers." Lingyu finally chose to commit suicide at age 25 on International Women's Day, saying, "Rumors kill me."

Based on the success of *Rouge*, Golden Harvest is producing *Ruan Lingyu*. Since the large film studios own all the theaters in Hong Kong, such backing is critical for distribution. This vertically integrated structure extends into foreign distribution as well, with U.S. Chinatown theaters affiliated exclusively with one studio or another. Outside the Chinatown circuit, films by directors like Kwan are often hard to see here. Hong Kong film companies don't distinguish between mass market and specialized films and generally ignore the possibility of a limited release in U.S. art houses and university cinemas.

When film programmer Barbara Scharres unsuccessfully tried to book *Rouge* for a Hong Kong film series at the Art Institute of Chicago's Film Center, she found the studio was holding back on such deals, hoping for a big-league U.S. distributor to pick up the film. "Dream on," laughs Scharres. As she explains, "The Hong Kong distributors create a vast labyrinth for people trying to show their films in the U.S. If it's not going to be shown in every mall, they don't want to bother with you. They don't have any concept of building an audience." While it's not impossible to see films by Hong Kong's non-mainstream directors—Kwan, Tsui Hark, Allen Fong, Lawrence Ah Mon, plus a few others—it does require keeping an eagle eye on film festivals and local Asian media centers and museums. It can be worth the effort.

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independent judiciary and a well-functioning public realm in which common problems are freely and rationally discussed. If these other conditions are absent or threatened, the power of the press evaporates, no matter how many scandals reporters uncover.

From this perspective, the Nixon years can be seen as a double challenge to journalists. The first challenge was to expose the secret wars Nixon was conducting abroad and at home. (It was not until Watergate was over that we realized how large a task this was, and how poorly the press handled it.) At the same time, however, Nixon was conducting a more open war against our democratic institutions. In public pronouncements and official acts he demonstrated his contempt for Congress, the courts, the press and, of course, the Constitution.

This other scandal was a matter of public record, but that didn't mean it registered in public consciousness. What was most needed in reporting Nixon's "other" war was a moral consciousness journalists are often taught to suppress. More than good sources, the right values had to be found—and defended week to week. This is what Jonathan Schell did from 1969 to 1975. No Deep Throat whispered secrets in Schell's ear or pointed him in the right direction. He was led by his profound understanding of the Constitution.

**Fine-tuning the news:** In 1966 and 1967 Schell had traveled to Vietnam to write two on-the-scene accounts for *The New Yorker* (recently re-issued by Pantheon as *The Real War*). In 1969 he became a "thumb-sucker." At home in New York, he studied the papers and watched television, looking for threatening signs as Vietnam begat Watergate. He composed his thoughts into short unsigned essays for *The New Yorker's* "Notes and Comment" section. As a reporter, he remained alert. His sources were the words and deeds of Nixon and his men.

Schell's method is itself a statement about the importance of the public record in a democracy. Instead of springing new and astounding facts on his readers, he worked with the facts as they were already known—known but not fully understood. As an intelligent citizen trying to think through the latest turn of events, he sent out the message that politics was still comprehensible; that the dangers we faced were real but by no means obscure; that by remembering what a democracy is all about, we could find our way out of Vietnam and Watergate.

Reading these pieces now, one is struck again by the crazy, almost surreal quality of the events. No matter how well you remember the Nixon years, you'll be amazed at the things that went on. But Schell never participated in the paranoia of the hour. His style is lucid and direct,

## Constituting a threat: Nixon's the one

**Observing the Nixon Years: "Notes and Comment" from *The New Yorker* on the Vietnam War and the Watergate Crisis, 1969-1975**  
By Jonathan Schell  
Pantheon, 274 pp., \$19.95

By Jay Rosen

**T**HUMB-SUCKING, "NAVEL-GAZING" and "armchair observations" are a few of the terms professional reporters use to disparage those who merely comment on the news. The source of this hostility is the journalistic conviction that the really important truths are concealed from view—in secret memos, the sealed lips of co-conspirators, the minds of powerful men who alone know what they are about to do. The journalist's job, then, is to "expose" the truth, as a photographer exposes film—by allowing light

to strike what had previously remained hidden.

The Nixon years showed how dependent we are on the techniques of exposure. Without the Pentagon Papers and the various investigations of Watergate, Nixon and his men might have kept the country in the dark for much longer, and at a much higher cost.

But in a democracy, especially, there are dangers in relying on the exposé. Spectacular revelations momentarily energize the body poli-

### POLITICS

tic, but their enduring lesson can be a cynical and destructive one: the public world is but a mask, a false front for the real game of politics. Citizens, as outsiders, cannot hope to discern the shape of events until some reporter or prosecutor uncovers the truth on our behalf. Whatever

the outcome of the investigation, we at home are revealed as dupes of the system who mistook the words and deeds of public officials for the realities of politics.

**Developing Teflon:** Nothing better illustrates the weaknesses of the exposé than the emergence of the "Teflon president." Reagan's apparent immunity from negative publicity puzzled the press, which eventually threw up its hands and decided that he must be the century's most popular president, so strong a political leader that his thin grasp of the issues hardly mattered.

An alternative explanation for the Teflon phenomenon would focus not on Reagan's strength, but on the diminishing power of the exposé in a de-politicized and demoralized public realm. The Iran-contra scandal seems to prove the point: with all its frightening implications for democracy and the rule of law, the story

went nowhere once the spectacular revelations ceased.

An aggressive press, then, is no substitute for an alert and engaged citizenry, a responsible Congress, an

**Nixon conducted an open war against our democratic institutions. In his public pronouncements and official acts he showed contempt for Congress, the courts, the press and, of course, the Constitution.**



careful about the facts but never detached—a model of public prose.

Schell was right about Vietnam from the beginning, not only in his opposition to the war, but in his grasp of what made the military's task impossible. The South Vietnamese government, he argued, was not so much corrupt or inept as nonexistent:

*Even to call it a corrupt dictatorship is, in a sense, too complimentary, because to speak of corruption is to imply that what is corrupt was once healthy, and to speak of a dictatorship implies a degree of control that Saigon does not exercise over its people. Its one talent is for destruction, and this is borrowed from us.*

**With friends like these:** Since the Saigon government did not have even the minimal support of its people, no policy of "Vietnamization" could work, for the Vietnamese did not see the fighting as their fight. The politicians had thus assigned the military a job that "was simply not there to be done."

The "friends" we were supposed to be helping did not behave like friends and did not want our help. "Having been sent to do a job that turned out not to exist, our military men, who were forced, after all, to live and work in the real Vietnam and not in the imaginary one in the politicians' heads, began to do something else. They began to make war against the people whom they were supposed to be saving but who didn't want to be saved." This wasn't the war our leaders had in mind.

Schell adds, "but it did have the reassuring advantage of being, in a sense, real."

A recurring observation in the book is the U.S. government's "habit of deciding the nature of the situation we face by taking notice only of our own intentions and our own actions." This pathology had taken a frightening turn, Schell wrote in October 1969, after the siege at Khe San. We had begun to take actions, the point of which was to vindicate past misstatements.

"Usually," he writes, "one thinks of propaganda as a technique by which men in back rooms try to mold public opinion through giving out false information about things that have already happened. But in Vietnam the propagandists have gotten themselves into the planning stage of things, and it is not the reports of the events but the events themselves that are, in a sense, false." Thus Khe San, a site with little strategic importance, was built up into a major battle because it conformed to a kind of war the military wanted to be fighting—a "real" war, with a clearly visible enemy.

In observing Nixon and his men, Schell assumed an attitude foreign to most journalists. He was willing to be shocked and dismayed by Nixon's lies, as if he still expected that public officials would feel a duty to the truth. Refusing to relinquish this expectation, he remained alert to the escalating importance of Nixon's deceptions. Indeed,

escalation is one of the themes of the book. This is one of Schell's most important achievements. Many of the pieces begin with what happened last week and end with what *could* happen in the climate Nixon was creating.

**Unthinking the unthinkable:** *Observing the Nixon Years* can be read as a series of reports on two future events that would make all subsequent reports irrelevant. One was the day the Constitution ceased to function as the law of the

**Schell assumed an attitude foreign to most journalists. He was willing to remain shocked and dismayed by the lies of Nixon and his men.**

land. The other was nuclear annihilation. The fact that neither actually occurred does not diminish Schell's reports, for in them he was not posing as a prophet. Rather, he was trying to articulate a danger that would be fully visible only later, when it was too late.

It was the steps toward some ultimate disaster that Schell undertook to describe: Nixon's increasingly bold assertions of executive power, his increasingly open hostility to any public challenge, the in-

creasingly remote violence of our bombing campaign in Vietnam, the increasingly psychological aims of the war, which was being fought to demonstrate our resolve and preserve our credibility as a world power.

Schell understood from the beginning that the ultimate demonstration of toughness and resolve was the use of nuclear weapons. He read this fact into the news, forcing his readers to imagine that if we *were* heading toward nuclear disaster, it would look and sound like something else first.

The book reaches a dizzying height in a piece published Nov. 5, 1973. The Saturday Night Massacre had just demonstrated the lengths to which Nixon would go, and a constitutional crisis had burst upon Washington. Across the globe the Yom Kippur War had broken out, with the Soviets threatening to get involved. In response, Nixon put the Strategic Air Command on alert. He also instructed the new special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, to stop seeking any further evidence from the White House about Watergate in order to avoid further confrontations at a time of world crisis. Schell writes:

*A president with a penchant for decisive actions had taken two in one week—one in the foreign realm and one in the domestic realm. In the course of doing so, he had merged the two crises into one. Watergate, that uncontrollably spreading thing, had become en-*

*tangled with the apocalypse. Now Donald Segretti and his obscene letters and stink bombs were mixed up with armies clashing in the Middle East, and what Bebe Rebozo had done with Howard Hughes' hundred thousand dollars was mixed up with what the B-52s carrying the hydrogen bombs would do, and the survival of all of us rested on how these matters mingled in the mind of our beleaguered, angry, smiling president.*

Jonathan Schell uncovered no new facts about Vietnam or Watergate. But he got the story the press as a whole missed: in Vietnam and at home, the president was creating a constitutional crisis in the fullest sense of the term, in which all the means by which we constitute ourselves as a democracy were under attack.

Congress, the courts, the press, the public record, the rule of law and, ultimately, the Constitution and the Earth—all were imperiled. This is the story Schell reported, seeking not to expose but to explain while there was still time. We must hope that the next time there is someone equally talented doing this work: watching the news, reading the papers, consulting the Constitution, imagining the worst and taking up a pen as events take on their own terrible momentum. ■

**Jay Rosen** is an assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at New York University and an associate at NYU's Center for War, Peace and the News Media.

#### Retreat from Doomsday

By John Mueller  
Basic Books, 327 pp., \$20.95

By Peter Karman

## Could war be going the way of slavery?

nor and symbolic forms as distracting from this goal.

**Shifting bottom lines:** Well, maybe that's a good thing. Maybe the fact that we have transformed

### WAR

the Pentagon from a martial to a commercial enterprise indicates that while we are willing to profit from militarism, we are no longer willing to consider war itself as an acceptable activity.

John Mueller's timely and interestingly argued book makes just this point. War, says Mueller, is an idea whose time has been running out since the early 19th century when Holland, Switzerland and Sweden opted out of the war system and decided to run their societies without recourse to it.

Mueller's thesis is simple—maybe a bit too simple. War is going out of style, he says, because it is repulsive and futile. Whatever aura of romantic heroism it once held has been largely overwhelmed by the means of massive devastation and automated slaughter that have also robbed war of such fruits of victory as political and economic dominance over

the vanquished.

The 44 leading developed countries are enjoying an unprecedented long wave of peace. NATO and the Warsaw Pact are crumbling because they are no longer able to justify their existence as bulwarks against invasions that neither side wants nor could survive. Large parts of the developing world, particularly Latin America, have shied away from war for generations. Meanwhile, the unavoidable lesson of the Arab-Israeli, Iran-Iraq, Lebanese, Afghan and other current conflicts is that war—if it ever did—no longer solves problems or confers benefits.

**In America, military matters are routinely dealt with from the inside of the pork barrel.**

Consciousness of the futility of war operates at two levels, according to Mueller. It is apparent in the rational calculations of those who

lead the developed countries. Since World War II, they have found no reason to think that making war on each other would produce results more favorable to their particular interests than keeping the peace. But at a deeper, subrational level, says Mueller, war is becoming as unthought of and ridiculous in the contemporary psyche as the once-popular institutions of slavery and dueling.

**Unplanned obsolescence:** It simply doesn't cross the mind of modern employers to engage in slavery or of disputants to challenge each other to pistols at 10 paces. When the media tells us of rare outbreaks of slavery, such as when farm workers are press-ganged in the rural outback, we're shocked. And if Jim Wright asked Newt Gingrich to choose his weapon, the popular response would be ridicule. To increasing numbers of people around the world, the idea of war evokes similar dismissal.

Basic to Mueller's argument is that this propensity for peace, rather than the assumed deterrent effect of nuclear weapons, is the main cause for warlessness among the major powers in the current era. Apart from this anti-establishmentarian conclusion, Mueller comes to his unconventionally sensible observations about the obsolescence of war by a remarkably conventional route. He's no revisionist or radical. He tends to mechanistically wrap modern his-

tory around his thesis and is accepting of the standard U.S. Cold War shibboleths about the "red menace."

He seems not to appreciate that movements for national liberation and social justice have typically taken up war as a last resort when those with power and wealth refused to deal with their grievances at any other level. (And herein lies one of the odder contradictions of the modern world: that Marxists, who would much prefer to do ideological battle, have been generally more successful at fighting wars than militaristic capitalists who apparently still don't realize how right they are when they say that the only thing the commies understand is force.)

Nevertheless, Mueller has written a necessary book. He is particularly refreshing in noting that peace is not the cause or consequence of harmony and justice, but "merely what comes about when nations and people neglect the institution of war." He's making it easier for us by showing that we don't have to make a better world in order to get rid of war. We just have to stop accepting the *idea* of war for the world to get just that much better. The good news that we can see from the current outbreak of peace in various corners of the globe is that more of us, for whatever good or bad reasons, are doing just that.

If people don't want to fight, as Mueller paraphrases Sol Hurok, nothing will stop them. ■



# Suriname

Continued from page 24

caught, dey be killed, and dey towns like Albina be burn to de ground. Das why all deese refugees be here in Paramaribo. You don't never see dat befo', because Bush Negroes, dey don't like de city; dey don't work for no man but deyselves."

As it turned out, the guesthouse where I was staying had given one whole wing over to refugee families. I had seen Rotary Club buses coming to pick up the children of families crowded into rooms there, part of a pattern of generosity toward the Bush Negroes for reasons soon explained to me by a number of people. Almost everyone viewed the Bush Negroes as people who were, as the taxi driver had put it, "fighting our fight."

Many of the people in Paramaribo believe that the revolt against the military was being carried out by Bush Negroes because it was easier for them to operate under cover of the jungle. But a Dutchman I met offered another explanation.

"These Bush Negroes, they don't give a flip who's in power as long as you leave them alone," he said. "Bush Negroes do some light smuggling—cigarettes, canned goods, stuff like that—from French Guiana; have done for years. The army decided to put a stop to it. Now it's women who do the smuggling. You'd think the stupidest person in the world could figure out that if you start hassling Bush Negro women, you're going to have trouble with Bush Negro men. But the army was too dumb to figure that out, and now they've got a full-scale revolution on their hands."

"What about the Amerindians?" I asked.

He cast me a sideways glance. "Ask my wife; she's Amerindian."

"Amerindians and Bush Negroes have always gotten along," she said evasively. "There's enough room in the jungle for everybody."

"The lady wants to know how it is now," her husband said. "Not how it's been for the last three centuries."

"Amerindians don't like to fight, but the military drafted some into this Delta Force, they call it. They use Amerindians to track Bush Negroes in the jungle, because your ordinary soldier, he can't do that." She

paused. "You understand, there's nothing an Amerindian can't find in the jungle, if it's there."

"Where my parents live, last September two soldiers came by in a tank on their way from one base to another. For no reason they blew up the village. An 18-year-old girl and her baby, asleep in a hammock, were killed. The papers say there will be a trial, but who knows? So now some Amerindians are joining the Bush Negroes."

**It's a jungle out there:** I decided to pay a visit to one of Suriname's famous nature reserves—perhaps the 149,000-acre Raleigh Falls reserve deep in the jungle, or Brownsberg, a pristine rain forest reserve not far from the capital.

But Anita, the woman in charge of tours to the reserves, explained that the facilities had been burned at Raleigh Falls, and that Brownsberg had been declared off-limits because the area was, according to the military, "controlled by terrorists."

Anita sensed my frustration at getting to see no more of Suriname than the narrow cultivated strip along the coast and took me to meet Edward, whom she described as a 37-year veteran of the forestry service, of Jewish-African-Dutch-Amerindian descent. "In other words," she laughed, "Edward is pure Surinamese."

He volunteered to used his forestry pass to take us into the off-limits rain forest.

"What about the terrorists?" I asked.

"Dat a military word," Edward said scornfully. "Don't mean nothing us."

On the way we passed a train overturned beside the tracks, with tall grass growing through its windows. According to my guidebook, Suriname had one train, a steam engine relic built in 1904.

"Dat's it," Edward jerked his thumb at the overturned train. "Murdered."

"Who? The engineer?"

"De train." The old forester sighed. "Soldiers not de smartest people. Dey want to inspect de train for Bush Negroes, so dey yell 'halt.' De crew put on de brake, but train no stop on de spot like a car; it got to run on a few meters. Soldiers get mad at train 'cause it still moving and start shootin' with dem machine guns. De crew get bullets in dey legs, but de train she shot plumb to death; don't never run again."

As someone who lived in a media-obsessed nation, subscribed to alternative publications, had an interest in foreign affairs and carried an expensive, up-to-date travel guide, why had I not heard that there was an armed struggle going on in Suriname?

"I didn't know there was a war here," I said crossly.

Anita looked at me, puzzled. "Why would anybody in the U.S. care? It's only our people being hurt." There was an embarrassed si-

lence. "You're a tourist; you came here to have a good time. Don't think about it."

Edward pushed his spectacles up on his nose and smiled. "Suriname don't have it so bad. Where the U.S. fixin' things, lotta more people gettin' killed."

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Rosa Jordan, a journalist living in Malibu, Calif., recently traveled to Suriname. She has written for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Toronto Star* and many other periodicals.

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Use the Calendar to announce conferences, lectures, films, events, etc. The cost is \$20.00 for one insertion, \$30.00 for two insertions and \$15.00 for each additional insert, for copy of 50 words or less (additional words are 50¢ each). Payment must accompany your announcement, and should be sent to the attention of ITT Calendar.

### NEW YORK May 22-25

THE NEW YORK MARXIST SCHOOL  
MONDAY, MAY 22—Marxist Theory, Marxist Discourse and Political Praxis; Karsten Struhl; 8 p.m.  
TUESDAY, MAY 23—Video: Gerry Adams' Address to the 1986 Sinn Féin Ard Fheis presented by Christopher Lyons, 8 p.m.  
THURSDAY, MAY 25—Democracy and Repression in the Basque Country; Eva Forest; 8 p.m.

12th national Intensive Summer School. Monday, July 10-Friday, July 21. \$200. Limited scholarships available.

NYMS, 79 Leonard St. Unless otherwise listed, admission is \$5. Information: (212) 941-0332.

### WEST LAFAYETTE, IN May 25-June 11

Registration is now underway for the Conner Center tour to the Soviet Union, October 2-17, 1989. The tour will stop in Leningrad, Tallinn, Minsk, Moscow and Zagorsk with special focus on the Christian community. The program will explore the theme of theology of worship with the Russian Orthodox, Baptists and Methodists. For more information contact Don Nead, Conner Center for U.S.-USSR Reconciliation, 320 North St., West Lafayette, IN 47906, (317) 743-3861.

### SAN FRANCISCO May 28

Sixth Annual International AIDS Memorials, sponsored by Mobilization Against AIDS, will be held on Sunday, instead of the traditional Monday Memorial Day observance, to accommodate regions outside of the United States. For more information, contact Paul Boneberg, International AIDS Candlelight Memorial, c/o Mobilization Against AIDS, 1540 Mar-

ket St., Suite 60, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 863-4676.

### LOVELAND, OH June 9-11

"Issues of Justice and Global Spirituality," a workshop led by Patricia Mische, Ph.D., will explore how and why issues of justice are essentially religious and spiritual questions. Workshops will focus on: the economic, social, political situation in the Philippines; causes and effects of apartheid in South Africa; the history and present reality of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel and the Occupied Territories; and struggles for justice in housing and welfare in Cincinnati. For more information contact Grailville, 932 O'Bannonville Rd., Loveland, OH 45140, (513) 683-2340.

### LOS ANGELES June 14-19

"Siempre Adelante: Forever Forward," National Lawyers Guild annual convention towards carrying the fight for justice into the 1990s. Featured speakers include Angela Davis, Tony Mazzocchi, Frances Moore Lappé, Diane Watson, Larry Agran. Panels on dismantling the military-industrial complex, gangs, affordable housing and immigrants' rights. Over 30 workshops, receptions, L.A. murals tour, banquet, dance. Call (213) 937-3757 for brochure/info.

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### PITTSBURGH June 15-22

Marxist Literary Group presents Institute on Culture and Society. Featured speakers include Gayatri Spivak, Fred Jameson, Samuel Delaney, Denis Brutus, Page DuBois, James Berlin, Alan Wald, Stanley Aronowitz, Barbara Harlow and Michael Sprinker. For more information call or write: Paul Smith, English Dept., Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA 15213, (412) 268-6447.

### NORTH HAMPTON, MA August 10-13

The Center for Popular Economics is holding a conference on Progressive Economics in the 1990s, Aug. 10-13, in North Hampton, Mass. Includes workshops by CPE economists and activists on a wide variety of topics. Designed for activists and educators. No previous economics training needed. Call (413) 545-0743 or write CPE, Box 785T, Amherst, MA 01004.

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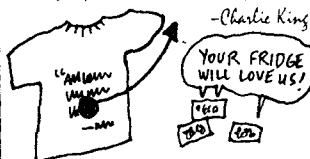
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LIFE IN HELL

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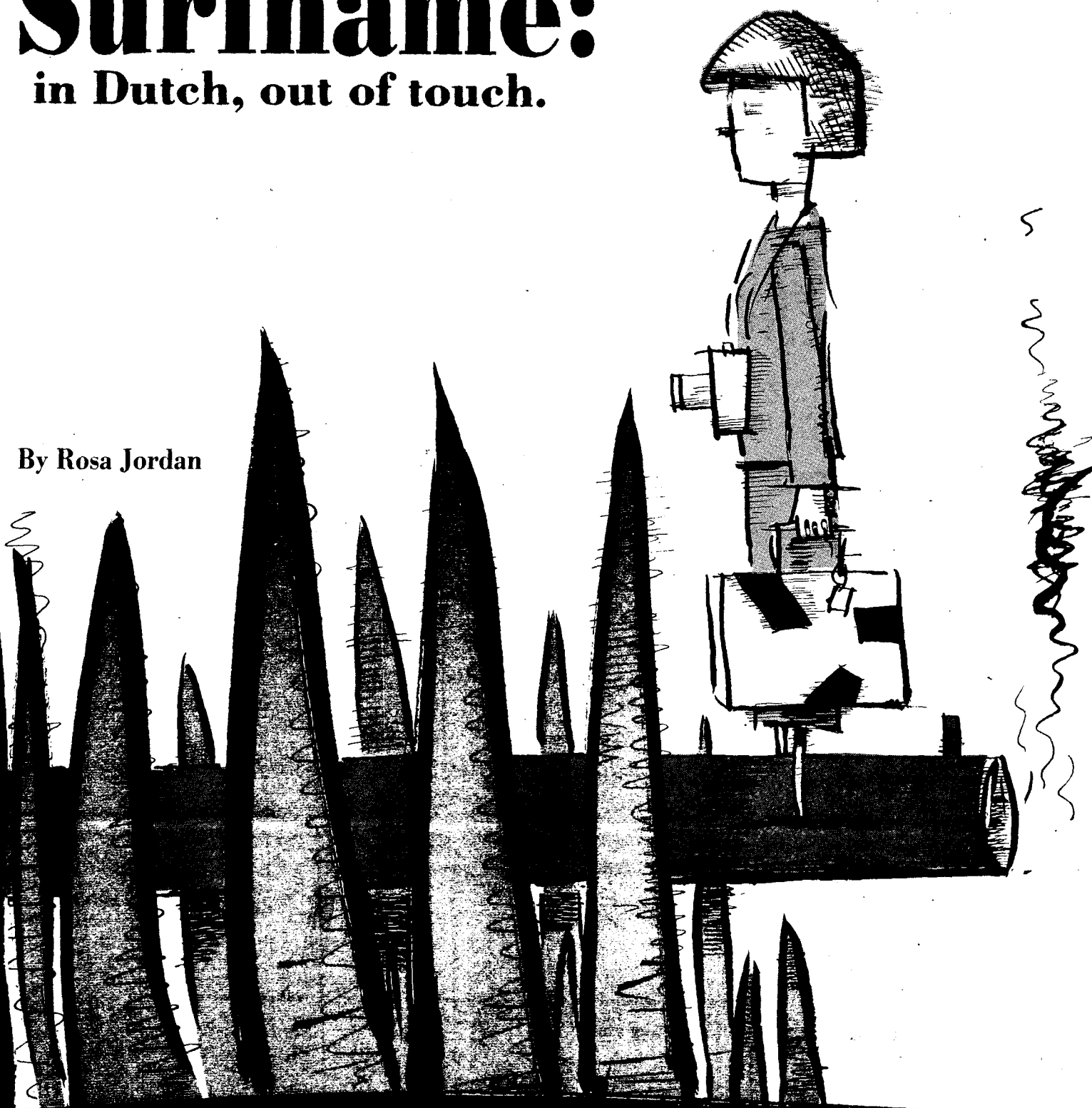
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# Suriname: in Dutch, out of touch.

By Rosa Jordan



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**I**t is tedious to spend the first moments in a new country standing in line while immigration officials squint at passports as if the print is smudged, the signature forged and the photograph resembles that of a well-known terrorist.

But when I got off the boat in Suriname, there was no line. Passengers entered a barren room where an MP barked one name at a time, asked questions and played squint-at-the-passport.

I did not take the jackboot approach for the warning it should have been. Like most Americans, I traveled with the mistaken assumption that I knew where I was going and was well informed enough to know what to expect when I got there. My research on Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana) indicated that I would find most of its fewer than 1 million people living in coastal towns surrounded by rice paddies and sugar plantations. The nation's vast jungle hinterland apparently did not appeal to anyone except native Amerindians and Bush Negroes (the latter being descendants of runaway slaves).

When my name was called, I explained

that I planned to spend a few days in the capital, then would go on to the eastern border town of Albina and catch a boat on to French Guiana.

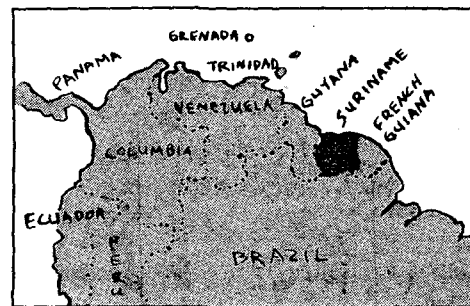
"Too many tourists in Albina," growled one soldier. "Take a plane."

I concealed my hostility to the authoritarian tone and planned to ignore the advice.

**Military naysayers:** Paramaribo is an exceptionally nice place if you like Dutch colonial architecture, meticulous cleanliness and superb Indonesian-East Indian-African creole food. But a few hours into my first morning the pleasure at having discovered such a lovely, inexpensive and untouristed city was interrupted by a sharp "Nay!" A soldier approached, wagging his finger at me, indicating that it was not allowed to do what I was doing, which was sitting on the sea wall. Moments later I saw a ferryboat that looked photogenic. But before I could snap the shutter, another soldier materialized and indicated that if I did this subversive thing, my camera would be confiscated.

I knew Suriname had had a military coup in 1980 and that, under pressure from the Dutch, elections had been held in 1987. A

new president had been installed, by which I supposed Suriname had returned to civilian government. I was beginning to suspect that it was the classic situation whereby a democratically elected president gets the



office while the military keeps the power.

In any case, Paramaribo under military "order" was not nearly as inviting as a city of such innate charm should have been, so I decided to continue to Albina.

**Getting there is half the fun:** I asked several people for directions to Albina, but got no response except "Nay" or a shake of the head. Did this mean that there was no bus, that they didn't know what I was asking or that they didn't know how to reach

a town that was only 100 kilometers away? I gave up asking directions and went looking for a taxi, confident that any cabdriver's English would be better than my Dutch.

But when I flagged down the first one and asked how much the two-hour trip would cost, he astonished me by replying "Nay, nay! It's hot in Albina now. Tourists make too much trouble."

When I said to the next cabdriver, "Take me to Albina," he laughed. "Well, maybe dey let you pass, but me, I black, same as Bush Negro; the military call me tourist, and I don't go nowhere for sure."

Suddenly my ear fine-tuned the "Taki-Taki" English spoken here, and I realized that the word I'd been hearing as "tourists" was actually "terrorists."

"What terrorists?" I asked carefully.

"Well, de military call all dem Bush Negroes terrorists. But de Bush Negroes, dey fighting for all of us, 'cause dey don't want the military, same as nobody don't want de military. We can't fight; we be killed for sure. Dem fight and run to de bush; don't most of 'em be caught. Only if dey be

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